MEDITATIONS IN VERSE

FOR THE SUNDAYS OF A YEAR

Class PS 2669

Book .P5

Sabbath Chimes;

OR,

MEDITATIONS IN VERSE FOR THE SUNDAYS OF A YEAR.

By Wm Morley Punshon, M.A.

New York:
PUBLISHED BY CARLTON & LANAHAN,
200 MULBERRY-STREET.
1868.

PS 2669
.P5

12-37991

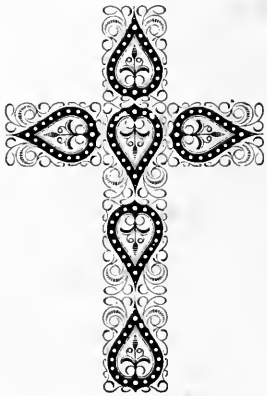
JAN 24 1909

PREFACE.

TO those whose "heart is as my heart" I offer this little volume, the offspring of a year's enforced pause amid the activities of a busy ministry. I covet for it, chiefly, three successes: that, if God wills, it may be a messenger of mercy to the wandering; that it may be a comforter to the troubled; and that it may be a memory of the writer to many friends.

W. M. P.

REDLAND, *February*, 1867.



CONTENTS.

	Page
Advent	11
Epiphany	25
Faith, (*Septuagesima*)	43
Hope, (*Sexagesima*)	46
Love, (*Quinquagesima*)	49
Lent	53
Easter	70
Whitsuntide	91
Trinity	94
Sabbath Morning	189
Sabbath Evening	192
Christmas Day	197
Good Friday	200

PAGE

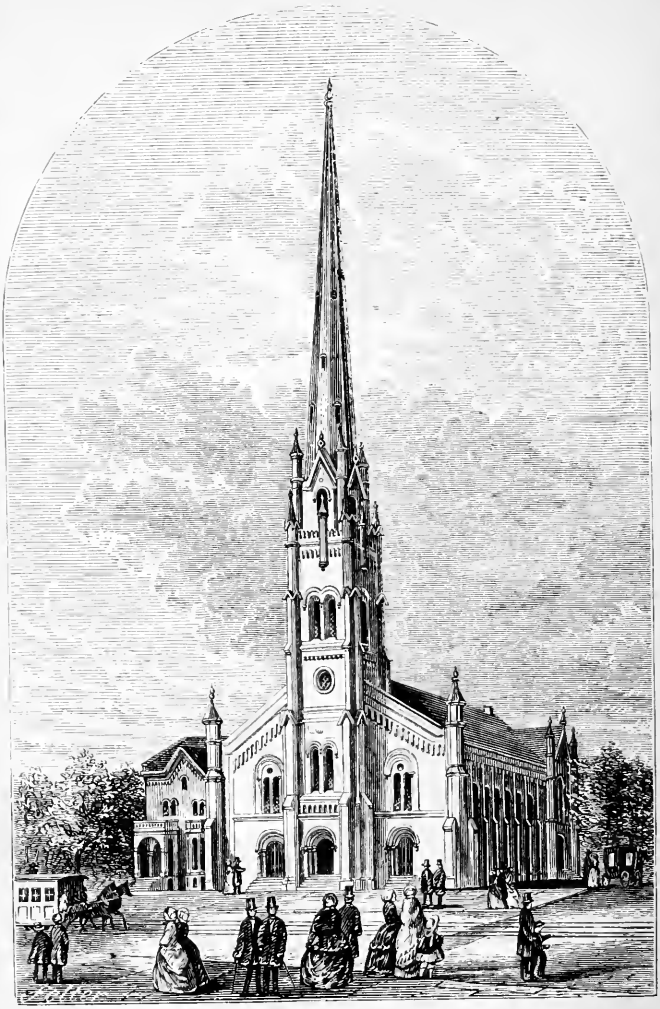
ASCENSION DAY..... 203

BAPTISM..... 207

THE LORD'S SUPPER..... 210

MATRIMONY..... 215

BURIAL OF THE DEAD..... 218



SABBATH CHIMES.

Advent.

I.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.—Isaiah xl, 3.

ITH lightnings belted, cloud and tempests broke
On Sinai's sacred crest,
When God before affrighted Israel spoke
His high behest.

In the cleft rock the cow'ring Prophet gazed
Upon the God unknown,
While, round the Awful Form, such brightness blazed
As girds the throne.

By many a gleam throughout the dazzled dark
He shamed his people's fear:
And Seers in desert visions bade us mark
His Presence near.

Still speak the voices, not with accents stern
Nor boding words of wrath,
As when the fiery cross is wont to burn
Through glen or strath.

When pelts the frightened hail upon the panes,
Stern Winter rules as king:
The sweet-breathed zephyrs and the gentler rains
Herald the Spring.

Though from the wilderness the summons swells,
"For God the way prepare,"
The spirit of a milder Advent dwells
Within its prayer.

Straight to our hearts it reaches, 'mid the throngs
Of thoughts which come and go,
As on dull ears of age a mother's songs
Sound clear and low.

It beats upon the spirit with a sense
Of softest, holiest calm;
A fragrant soul-myrrh;—a kind influence
Of healing balm.

He comes! the Saviour! haste to make him room!
Speed with your contrite vows!
Wear all the jewels! scatter the perfume!—
As fits a spouse.

Prepare his way! no wasteful thoughts and rude,
No dalliance with sin,
Must greet his march, nor on his sight intrude
When he comes in.

When he is nigh, no lion-lust must walk
Over the swarded green;
No ravening beasts through trampled pastures stalk
In rage unclean.

The way is callèd holy. All is still,
And pure, and heavenly bright,
As the sweet rose-hearts, which the dew-drops fill
On summer's night.

Where quiet ones in thoughtful moments stray
He lingers by their side,
Flings a rare charm on their Emmaus-way,
And loves to 'bide.

In upper rooms, where tarry earnest souls,
He passes through shut doors;
And heaven comes floating in as morning rolls
On golden floors.

O Advent blessèd! Lord! we wait for this
In hush of watching love;
Wait in thy temple; wait, to prove the bliss
All bliss above.

Come to thine own! come to thy wishful bride!
Shed thy pure love abroad,
And each heart shall become a clean and wide
"Highway for God."

Advent.

II.

Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.—1 CORINTHIANS iii, 13.

BY trifles, in our common ways,
Our characters are slowly piled:
We lose not all our yesterdays;
The man hath something of the child:
Part of the Past to all the Present cleaves,
As the rose-odors linger, e'en in fading leaves.

The habits of each wayward hour
Increase by their indulgence gain,
Till we are slaves beneath their power;
Yet all unconscious of our chain;
And to our fancied independence cling,
As birds which, in their cage, the songs of Freedom sing.

Never did flood sweep through the vale
Without some ravage left behind;
Some wreck to turn a young face pale;
Some household comfort undermined:
So hath each moment, used or wasted, left
To all an added grace, or of some charm bereft.

As when the ancient Temple rose,
In silence must the work be done;
As light upon the morning flows,
(The bright dower of the silent sun,)
So heedless men their busy tasks have plied,
Nor known what palaces were rising by their side.

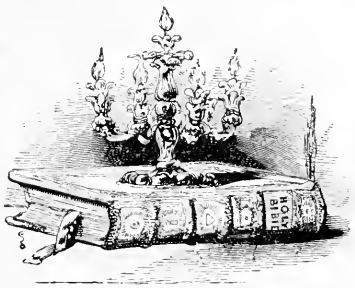
In ceaseless toil, from year to year,
Working with loath or willing hands,
Stone upon stone we shape and rear,
Till the completed fabric stands;
And, when the last hush hath all labor stilled,
The searching fire will try what we have striven to build.

Or firm in its abiding strength,
Or starting from th' unstable sand,
"The day" shall manifest at length
Each cunning thought in secret planned;
And woe to that which will not bear assay
When burns the testing flame, when breaks th' avenging day!

Full oft, in some unhappy night,
The fire hath wrapt around a house
Where Care had hid his griefs from sight,
And slumber stole o'er aching brows,
And startled sleepers, 'mid the fiery strife,
Are rudely roused from dreams, and battle for dear life:

Then all that darkness had concealed
Is by the ghastly dawn declared;
And in that sick'ning light revealed,
No household mystery is spared;
There was no time to alter—'mid the blaze;
Just as they were, they met the stranger's curious gaze.

And is it to be so at last?
All our life-work disclosed and tried!
In memory of the faithless past
Who may the stern assize abide?
Those who, on Sion's sure foundation old,
"Build" steadfast, day by day, the "silver" and the "gold."



Advent.

III.

Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?—MATTHEW xi. 3.

DOWN the dark vale of time full many a glance,
From her retirement lone,
The longing Church hath thrown,
Student of psalmist's song, or prophet's trance;
(Meek watcher through the ages;) to descry
The Shiloh pledged of old, and hail his advent nigh.

"Lo here! lo there!" on the bewildered sense
The haughty trumpets peal;
The false Messiahs steal
Weak hearts away on shallowest pretense,
In new revolts to place their fruitless trust,
Be lured where danger frowns, then left to shame and dust.

Let a frail reed be shaken by the wind,
And curious feet will press
Into the wilderness,
Haply the long-expected Seer to find,
Whose day the Patriarch, through long years discerned,
At whose name old men leaped, and holy matrons yearned.

Through baffled hope lives on the unquenched desire;
And as the hopeful bees
Keep murmuring to the breeze
Prophetic whispers of gay summers nigher,
So, though rebuked full oft, men waited still,
Till Sion's conquering Lord should stand on Sion's hill.

Not with the meteor's flash, but as the light,
Which, on the still world rolled,
Breaks to a morn of gold,
But in its noiseless march no infant's night
Is rudely ended, He by Jordan trod;
And the brave herald saw, and owned the "Lamb of God."

Yet in men's wondering hearts doubts rose and grew.
Obscure, despised, forlorn,
A mark for scowl and scorn;
Yet steadfast as a star. Can He be true?
Then, like a bright stream struggling to be free,
Forth flashed the eager question, "Tell us, art thou He?"

E'en yet the false Christs, 'mid the multitude
Of suitors with bold brows
Who come to woo the Spouse,
Upon her constancy of love intrude;
And fain would breathe suspicion on her troth,
And leave her, like themselves, false to her word and oath.

But thou, O Lord! wilt stoop to us infirm;
Love to resolve our doubt,
And bring us gladly out
Of our soul's prison; as from some dark germ
The sweet rose crimsons; till, all doubt at rest,
We lie, like the Beloved, enraptured on thy breast.

We too have mourned, because our carnal dream
Of pomp and courtly state,
And guards at palace gate—
Base lights of earthly kingdoms—did not gleam
Thy face around when thou didst come to reign;
But that thy crown was thorn—thy kingly tribute, pain.

Like the stern priests and scribes who made thee grieve,
We could not bear thy loss.
"But come down from the cross,
And our swift souls will hasten to believe."
O tear this Jewish traitor from within!
O cast it from our hearts—this shame of earthly sin!

Bid us be of the malefactor taught—
The felon by thy side,
Who longed "with thee" to abide
In that new heaven just opened to his thought;
And saw, while e'en disciples' eyes waxed dim,
The royal hosts of God—the prostrate Seraphim.

Still is our faith assured by thousand signs;
The blind are beauty's heirs;
And from demoniac lairs
Sound strange hosannas. E'en the dark grave shines
With heaven-light streaming through it at both ends—
A sepulcher disused, and tenantless of friends.

'Mid the world's strife of tongues to thee we cling.
We cease our endless quest
For other than the best:
Thou art our Prophet, thou our Priest and King!
Here will we give our home-sick longings o'er,
For Thou hast come; our love, our avarice ask no more.

Advent.

IV.

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing.—PHILIPPIANS iv, 4, 5.

SPEAK not thus to hearts all palpitating
In changeful agonies of sad suspense;
Which hope and dread by turns; the days awaiting
With a numb, weary sense:

When all the glory from the heaven is vanished,
As fantasies of sleep before the dawn;
While the poor hope, like exile newly banished,
Yet lingers—homeward drawn:

When, all the rapture of the summer over,
The flowers are withered in each woodland haunt,
And not a lark, from out the tufted clover,
Has heart enough to chant:

When on the wall the shadows gather blanker,
While hopeless illness wastes, or madness raves,
When the o'er-freighted bark, without an anchor,
Drifts on the scoffing waves:

When all the store of love, so closely cherished,
By tyrant hand is snatched from the embrace;
And all the light of the rich past has perished
Out of the dumb white face:

When the struck souls lie prostrate with repining,
And look defiant on the happy sun,
Which shines so bright, they almost grudge his shining
And wish the day were done:

When stern fate bids the heart live on, though breaking,
As palsy never lifted from the limbs,
Or, o'er a dead child, some crazed mother making
Rude melodies of hymns:

O heap not on these inner fires the fuel,
Nor tempt the loud rebellions you condemn!
Grant them at least your silence. It were cruel
To speak of peace to them.

Yet the words change not. "Be for nothing careful,
Neither for present want nor future dread;
But while Christ tarrieth, let your spirits prayerful
Keep listening for his tread."

Solemn they sound; like angels of compassion
To this low world on some loved errand bent;
And yet not angels, but in some strange fashion
With human natures blent.

They bid us not rebel, in foulest treason
To every earthly faculty and faith;
They meet our souls in truce, and furnish reason
For all the Scripture saith.

"The Lord at hand!" then why should we surrender
To any meaner claim our spirits' keys?
Or, faithless warders, open to pretender
What valor ne'er could seize?

Why, in our care-worn souls, should pulses riot
With passion frenzied, or with joy elate,
When from God's calming presence breathes a quiet
Upon the heart and state?

O what are these, our bitterest self-denials,
The griefs that make our roses drop so soon,
But God his children leading, through night's trials,
To an eternal noon!

Then hush, ye passionate voices! all-sustaining
Is the great comfort of our coming Lord;
Already is the long sad midnight waning,
For we can trust his word.

Epiphany.

I.

They stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.—Acts vii, 59.

THEY cast him forth, fierce in their rage and hate,
Outside the city gate;
While from his angel-face a luster streamed
So bright, so pure, it seemed
As if already heaven had let down
Her child's awaiting crown.

He, of the martyrs' host the eldest born,
Reckless of earth's poor scorn,
Wise by the faith of many ripening years
Above his wisest peers,
Through the dark vail of flesh the Godhead knew,
And died to prove him true.

As when wild clouds, struck by the lightning's brand,
Deluge the frightened land,
So fell man's deadlier shower, more prompt to kill;
Slave of more cruel will:
Soon on the ground a battered casket lay;
The gem had 'scaped away.

They gazed upon the ruins of a prison,
From which *a man* had risen;
And, like a sunrise on a dying storm,
Came many an angel form,
And sang, amid a silence rapt and deep,
"He gives his loved ones sleep."

Whence was the goodly strength upon him poured
But from his visioned Lord?
Swift, or to chide the wavering, or the o'erfraught
To win to brighter thought,
Seen by a faith which nothing could estrange,
Through all life's curves of change.

Who look on Christ into his image grow,
Burn with diviner glow,
Wrestle intrepid in the spirit's strife,
And gather strength for life;
As troops are brave to scale the fire-swept hill
By dint of daily drill.

We crave thy likeness, Lord! our upward eyes
Would fain to thee arise;
Leave each fair pageant, each unholy shrine,
And, fastened all on thine,
Transformed by the blest gaze, aspire to stand
"Faultless" at thy right hand.

Though in their baffled rage the heathen groan,
Christ sits upon the throne.
To crush his foes, to screen his own from ill,
Kingly, he sitteth still;
"Expecting," not impatient, till the chime
Shall sound the last of Time.

But, when from murd'rous hands the martyrs break,
He rises—for their sake;
He, whom no shock of battled worlds could move,
In recompensing love,
Rises, to give, whene'er his Stephens come,
Their warmest welcome home.

Epiphany.

II.

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.—1 Corinthians v, 6.
Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.—Galatians vi, 7.

SPEAK not of trifles light as air,
Or froth of Ocean's pride;
For things, on which no thought we spare,
The mightiest forces hide.
As slumbers, in the clod, the fire,
As lingers music in the lyre,
So future destinies are born
From hours of prayer, or hours of scorn.

Where God in generous fullness dwells,
Nor small nor great is known;
He paints the tiniest flowret-cells
O'er emerald meadows strown;
And sees, but not with kinder eyes,
The heavens grow rich with sunset dyes;
Both ministrant to beauty's sense,
Both signs of one Omnipotence.

He comes not forth with pageant grand
His marvels to perform;
A cloud "the bigness of a hand"
Can blacken heaven with storm.

A grain of dust, if He arrange,
The fortunes of a planet change.
An insect reef can overwhelm
The stately navies of a realm.

There are no trifles. Arks as frail
As bore God's prince of old,
On many a buoyant Nile stream sail
The age's heirs to hold.
From Jacob's love on Joseph shed,
Came Egypt's wealth and Israel's bread;
From Ruth's chance gleaning in the corn,
The Psalmist sang; the Christ was born.

Each spirit weaves the robe it wears
From out life's busy loom,
And common tasks and daily cares
Make up the threads of doom.
Wouldst thou the vailèd future read?
The harvest answereth to the seed.
Shall Heaven e'er crown the victor's brow?
Ask tidings of the battle now.

O wise beyond all written page
Are those who learn to say,
"Less worth were centuries of age
Than golden hours to-day!"
For in the present all the past
And future years are folded fast.
And in each laden moment lie
The shapes of an eternity.

Epiphany.

III.

Return unto thy rest, O my soul.—Psalm cxvi, 7.

HERE is the rest we long to gain,
The rest beyond decaying?
Our life-long chase of shadows vain
Has wrought our heart's betraying.
Our harps are sadly mute from sound,
And hang on strangers' willows;
Our dove no sheltering home hath found,
But wearies o'er the billows.

In restless pain we heave and toss
Like playthings of the Ocean;
And mourn with sharpest pangs of loss
Dead objects of devotion.
We follow light where'er it gleams,
Though marsh and mist encumber;
We reign, anointed kings,—in dreams,—
But wake, forlorn, from slumber.

We grasp at grains of shining dust,
But in the grasp they perish;
We put in men's applause our trust—
It cheats the hopes we cherish.

Remorse—a ghostly shadow—blights
Each wreath we weave for pleasure;
But restless still we scale the heights,
Or search the mines for treasure.

O, naught of earth can e'er avail
While Eden-mem'ries haunt us!
Our longings are on larger scale
Than lower worlds can grant us.
We pant within the vail to be,
To roam in fields elysian,
And, "in his beauty," God to see
Nor die beneath the vision.

He only "in His likeness" made
Our souls in the beginning;
And he the costlier ransom paid
To bar the doom of sinning.
He who the stars in courses keeps,
And governs cold Orion;
He lifts us from the restless deeps,
And plants our feet on Sion.

To Him, long strayed, we venture back,
Nor 'mong dark mountains wander;
God pledges peace upon the track,
And endless welcomes yonder.
E'en now each grateful spirit hears
His voice the lost ones calling—
"Return! your eyes shall cease from tears,
Your feet be safe from falling."

Epiphany.

IV.

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.*—MATTHEW xiii, 25.

THE furrows are straightly drawn
In the freshly-opened soil,
And in the blush of the amber dawn
The sower goes forth to toil.

He fears not the winter's frown;
He knows, as he hastens on,
From each good seed that he flingeth down
May a sevenfold store be won.

He can trust the land for wealth,
For Nature is not forsworn.
Unless some enemy work by stealth
He shall sing 'mid shocks of corn.

In the chill and secret night,
While he sleeps away his cares,
And dreams that the harvest-moon is bright,
That enemy soweth tares.

* This subordinate lesson may fairly be drawn from the Parable of the Tares, though, in its original utterance, it had of course another application.

Till the long, long months are sped,
Till the wheat is ripe in ear,
Till fields art gay with the reaper's tread,
Will the noxious weeds appear.

And if some one asketh, Whence
'Mid the precious come the vile?
'Tis when slumber steals the captive sense
The enemy works his wile.

Ah me! how often are strown,
In the wider human field,
Those evil seeds which, untimely sown,
Will a baneful harvest yield!

The enemy doth not sleep,
But, as with an eldritch spell,
He works, with a barbarous craft and deep,
The ill from the seeming well.

He breathes on the good desire,
And stifles its upward aim;
He kindles the passion's lambent fire
Into a murderous flame.

He breathes on thrift, and it turns
To a hungry greed of gold;
On zeal, and the red-browed anger burns
Like a bale-fire on the wold;

On self-respect, and it fumes
  Like a war-horse in its pride;
On faith, and it cowers in darkened rooms
  Where ghostly visitants glide.

He whispers fear, and it pales
  In the feebleness of fright;
He clouds the heaven till the pole-star fails
  To cheer the mariner's sight.

Restless and fierce as a flood
  Which death on its bosom bears—
Thus ever at work to blight the good,
  The enemy soweth tares.

Watch! Watch by the furrows dark,
  Till the weary night is done,
And o'er the ridges the herald-lark
  Is sent to announce the sun.

If the eyelids wakeful keep,
  Ye are warned against the foe;
'Tis when brain and heart are still with sleep
  That he ventureth forth to sow.

Epiphany.

V.

The men of Nineveh shall rise in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it.—MATTHEW xii, 41.

S on some queenly forehead shines a rare and costly gem,
So shone the truth—all price beyond—in fair Jerusalem;
The Truth Incarnate through her streets in weary sojourn trod,
And, truer than her priesthood knew, her Temple guested God.

No timid prophet, frightened 'neath the burden which he bore,
Spoke sadly in her stately halls one warning, and no more;
But God's own Son revealed himself by many a healing sign,
And from their graves the dead came forth to witness him divine.

No lightnings clave the shuddering air around his Saviour-path,
No hearts turned, sick'ning, from a voice which spake of naught but wrath;
But loving word and loving deed hope to the vilest gave,
That he had come from foulest sin and fiercest doom to save.

But as, when swept by angry winds, the waves more angry swell,
So o'er that city proud and stern no contrite silence fell;
But louder rang her rebel songs, and scornful in her pride,
Alike the love of Heaven she spurned, and wrath of Heaven defied.

* * * * * * * * *

The sun shone bright o'er Nineveh, and every marble street
Was filled with morning greetings, and with fall of hurrying feet;
Aloft the sounding voices swelled through all the slumbrous air,
From mart of many traders, and from Nisroch's fane of prayer.

But, as pale Nature holds her breath beneath the thundercloud,
By spell of sudden silence was that voiceful city bowed;
And through the ghostly stillness, like a knell, uprose the tone,
"Yet forty days, and Nineveh is" humbled or "o'erthrown."

With eyes that shone with secrets, and with haggard looks and wan,
From street to street the Prophet passed—a lonely, burdened man;

He passed, and spoke, and vanished, as some specter of the night,
Which lifts one dooming finger, and then mocks the straining sight.

But to the city's heart that word leaped like a forkèd flame,
And smote each chord, which, trembling, broke in penitential shame;
And on and on, from hut to throne, the tide of sorrow swept,
Till, with a wail which reached to God, that mighty city wept.

* * * * * * * *

This, eager as the flowers are to wooing suns to yield!
That, hard as is the triple mail or boss of brazen shield!
And, in the white light of the throne, before which both shall stand,
Which will the judgment-angel choose to wear the guiltier brand?

O thou, on whom the Gospel light now sitteth like a crown,
Take heed lest thou by meaner lips art humbled and cast down!
Be still, my heart! and reverent, as the warning tale is told;
The clay into God's kingdom presses oft before the gold.

Epiphany.

VI.

He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?—MARK iv, 38.

When even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them.—MARK vi, 47, 48.

'ER Gennesaret, mountain-bordered,
Beats the storm, and swells the gale,
While the bark, divinely ordered,
Spreads for shore the laboring sail.
Faster falls the cloud-heart's raining;
Lightnings leap from thunder-caves;
Through the dead'ning midnight straining,
Wild eyes shine across the waves.

O how oft men weary, gazing
For some radiant help from far,
While above them, downward blazing,
Gleams some bright and friendly star!
In their billowy danger sharing
Lay their Lord, in human sleep
Calm as childhood's—while unsparing
Surged and strove the furious deep.

From his gentlest slumber parted,
Glance of that awaking eye
Soothes the lone and fretful-hearted,
Bids their fear in faith to die.
What to Him the wild commotion?
Vassals to his sov'reign will,
Fiercest wind or angriest ocean
Instant at his word are still.

* * * * * *

O'er Gennesaret, wildly blowing,
Chafe the sullen winds again,
While the voyagers "toil in rowing,"
With a dull impatient pain.
Deeper looms the dark before them,
Wearier grows each slack'ning hand,
No loved presence bending o'er them;
Hopeless night and distant land.

Louder roars the surge's clangor,
Which the troubled moon shines o'er;
And the surf-waves, white with anger,
Dash in battle on the shore:
But the Lord, his own beholding,
Watches o'er their roused alarms,
As some mother watches, folding
Frightened nurslings in her arms.

Wearily the night-watch weareth,
Weareth, sick'ning and forlorn,
Yet the promised help forbeareth;
Hush of blast, or glimpse of morn.
Then the waiting Saviour maketh
O'er the storm his path of peace;
From the wave the frenzy breaketh;
In the heart the discords cease.

On our souls be deeply graven
Lessons by these tempests taught:
Willeth Christ to lift the craven
Into realms of braver thought.
When with him we sojourn longer,
And the *heart* has stronger grown;
Rageth then the *storm-cloud* stronger,
And we brave the blast alone.

While untried we strive and wrestle
In our yet unripened strength,
Christ will slumber in the vessel,
And will speak the calm at length.
Through the wilder tempest scathless,
While we bravely breast the wave,
Still we hear him, "Be not faithless,
I am watching, I will save."

Faith.

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.—James i, 6.

THE restful look which angels wear;
The glance of an untroubled eye,
Whose quick, clear gaze still seeks the sky;
A mouth half parted, as for prayer;

All sunshine on the upward face;
All meekness in the folded palms;
As some fair girl, who asketh alms
For her blind father in his place:

Yes! this is Faith, a patient guest,
Content to wait till fuller time;
And nourishing a trust sublime
That she shall grasp the heavenliest.

The bliss of those who "have not seen;"
Who, through the months of dark decay,
Can realize the bright-haired May
Twining her coronets of green.

The bliss of those, who, all the night,
With cressets burning in the crypt,
Have seen the ruby morning, dipt
And bathed in glory, greet the sight.

Yes! this is Faith. It dares not doubt
The honor of the Father's Name;
For though the world may fill with blame,
The child goes proudly in and out.

Within itself its evidence
Has mastered fear and captured thought;
And all things seem as if o'erwrought
By pressure of celestial sense.

Of old, the venturous Genoese
Stood in a great thought calm and stern
'Mid rebel crew, his prow to turn
Through the vast reach of westward seas.

Careless, though the vexed waters swirled,
Like hate and envy's meaner things;
Until the land-bird's timid wings
Brought welcomes of a newer world.

With visions of unuttered good,
How drooped the dazzled eyelids dim,
What time before the Sanhedrim
Erect the earliest martyr stood!

Then in the teeth of foes he spake;
As those who see the opened gate,
Nor blench to meet the deadliest fate,
In Jesus' strength, for Jesus' sake.

Yes! this is Faith; which dares rely
Though all is hostile circumstance;
Only concerned to catch the glance
Of one all-seeing, loving Eye:

That Eye on which her own is bent,
Whose looks, whene'er they downward strike,
Can make ours to their pureness like
While gazing, filled with that intent.

And Christ will all the souls exalt
Of those who cleave to him alone,
Till, in the glory of the throne,
They are presented "without fault."

Lord! put this Faith within my heart,
That I may so familiar be
Thy light will not be strange to me
When I shall see thee "as thou art."

Hope.

We are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.—ROMANS viii, 24, 25.

WHO can tell of the sower's cares
As he wanders forth alone?
While the shrill wind whistles in wintry airs
To the answering surge's moan.

No sunny gleam in the leaden day,
No blithe companions around,
Silent he scatters the seed away
In the cold, uncertain ground.

Wearily, wearily forth he plods
With life for the yielding loam;
Who can say if ever, above the clods,
He shall hear the harvest home?

Shall the long, dark months which intervene
The work of the seed-time spoil?
Or the locust army blight the green
When it peeps above the soil?

Shall seed, long wooed by the jealous rain,
Into wanton fullness sprout?
Or the mad wind scatter the bearded grain,
In its boisterous glee, about?

O who can tell of the sower's cares,
As he wanders lone and mute,
And lightens his labors with many prayers
For the generous gift of fruit?

For some may fall where travelers tread,
And the wild birds round it flock;
And some where the furrow is sparsely spread
O'er a scarp of stubborn rock;

And some amid ranker thorns, which hide
The sun from the seed he leaves;
It were strange if ever the country-side
Should wave with the whitening sheaves.

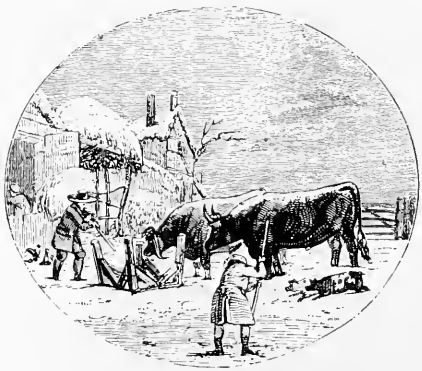
Though clouds may gather, and winds may sigh,
And scoffers deride his deed,
Yet ever from sunrise hastening by
The sower soweth the seed.

O, brave and bold is the sower's heart,
With his darkling fears to cope,
For the dull, gray future is spanned athwart
By the iris-arch of Hope.

And this heavenly word hath made him strong,
"The harvest shall never cease:"
And he scattereth still to that inward song,
For duty fulfilled hath peace.

'Twere pleasanter work, with the flower-crowned,
And the harvest laugh of friends;
But the God who blesses the fruitful ground,
The bliss of the seed-time sends.

And though lonely toil on earth is sad,
'Mid the frown of wintry weather,
The sowers and reapers—where all is glad—
Shall rejoice for aye together.



Love.

The greatest of these is charity.—1 Corinthians xiii, 13.

ROOM for the last and largest grace
The Church below can e'er express;
Which stamps on earthly hearts and base
The image of Heaven's loveliness!
Ordained the chiefest bliss to prove,
Likeness to God—for "God is Love!"

An honest eye, a brow so frank,
It ne'er can home a thought of guile;
The patent of a heavenly rank;
The signet of a heavenly smile;
What base-born craft can simulate
Credentials of such kingly state?

Forgiving, though she suffers long,
From low suspicion nobly free,
In faith sublime, in patience strong,
Eager from her own praise to flee.
"An angel, sure," men wond'ring say,
"Hath lighted upon earth to-day."

As, by the sluggard eyes unseen,
The dew her choicest balm distills;
As o'er the silent mountains green
The summer spreads her wealth of rills;
So Love *her* dews and rills lets fall:
Concealed herself—she blesses all.

Without her, vain the boastful noise
Of chariots' whirl and trumpets' blare:
Labor hath but distempered joys,
And darkness rests on cross and care;
And Zeal's wild lightnings cleave the gloom,
Lurid as torches in a tomb.

For men are thankless all, and prone
To think white raiment hides a scar;
And Doubt's complaining under-tone
Is heard through Faith's high hymns afar;
And selfish murmurs, loud and rude,
O'erpower the chant of Gratitude.

But where Love is the vail will lift;
As some belated traveler sees,
Clear through the shaggy tempest's rift,
Light of the steadfast Pleiades;
And, growing trustful at the sight,
Thinks of the heaven beyond the night.

If Love the faith and life inform,
  Men rise above their dark distrust,
As the bright wings—erewhile the worm–
  Leave in disdain their former dust.
When keen eyes pierce all falsehoods through,
Love bears the glance, for Love is true.

Love is the talisman which quells
  The stormiest surge of mortal strife;
And when we die, and dies all else
  Of goodliness or charm in life,
To fairer worlds translated high
Love passes the death-angel by.

Faith cannot scale the jasper walls;
  She bows and dies before the gate;
And Hope in mortal faintness falls,
  With blest fruition satiate:
But Love abides—the lasting grace—
For Love is native to the place.

But how shall souls defiled as ours
  E'er harbor such celestial guest?
She dwells with consecrated powers—
  The pure intent, the blameless breast;
Or hides in lowliest nooks away,
Like cereus-buds, which shrink from day.

"Nearer to Christ" we must retreat;
The bliss to loved disciples known;
And while his quiet pulses beat
Must learn to regulate our own;
Until we all *his* mind receive,
And learn of Love in love to live.

Lent.

I.

Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? . . . Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free.—Isaiah lviii, 5, 6.

Thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head.—Matthew vi, 17.

HERE'S winter on the hills to-day.
The sad wind soughs o'er churchyard knolls,
And weary nature seems to say,
"'Tis Lenten-tide for sinful souls."

The barb is in our heart to-day;
Sore crushed with sense of ail and sin,
We feebly strive and faintly pray,
'Gainst danger near, for grace within.

We mourn our pride and passion's stain,
The earthly in our hearts enshrined;
The rebel flesh, too oft in vain
Commanded by the nobler mind;

And all of human curse or care
Which lurk life's dangerous paths among,
To quench the altar-flame of prayer,
Or hush the heavenward strain of song.

Hence! selfish trust and sordid aims!
No longer on our memories crowd!
Our heart its inner fast proclaims,
And "fears to enter in the cloud."

Bold in the sight of men we tread.
Who wore for us the crown of thorn
He bade us to "anoint the head;"
The Christian fast is manly borne.

Sad with the smart of contrite pain,
We keep apart our vigils lone,
And inly weep, like her of Nain,
The tears which melt the heart from stone.

We wail not the remorseful cry
Once wrung from hopeless traitor's breast·
The offended Saviour passeth by
As erst, to breathe not wrath, but rest.

Calmly floats on the guarded ark,
Though fiercely the proud waters roll;
Exults and sings, above the dark,
The bird with morning in his soul.

It were not meet His love to spurn;
While humbled, we ourselves abase;
For contrite hearts the shadows turn
To loving smiles upon his face.

The Bridegroom of the Church hath still
His royal feast before her spread;
And while *he* lingers, nothing will
The "children of his chamber" dread.

Chastened by him, before his feet
We cast our sloth, and shame, and pride;
His strength invoke, his love entreat,
Who saith, "I will not always chide."

Then ready or for work or war,
We keep the fast which he doth choose;
And in his service valiant are,
"The bands of wickedness to loose."

Thus, from our Lent, his grace shall make
An easier road from earth to heaven;
And, pardoned for the Saviour's sake,
"We love, for we have much forgiven."

Lent.

II.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.—MATTHEW iv, 1.

For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.—HEBREWS iv, 15.

For in that He himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.—HEBREWS ii, 18.

FIERCELY on Salem's towers and hills
The hot sun striketh down;
The feverish pulse of summer thrills
The desert bare and brown;
As, Spirit-guided, through the languid air,
Moves one sad form apart for fasting, strife, and prayer.

Nature hath no foreboding voice;
No battle trumpets blow;
The heedless sons of men rejoice;
The mornings come and go;
But in that desert deadlier conflict nears
Than where the chariots roll, or glance the glittering spears.

The lists are spread. In solemn tryst,
In God's eternal plan,
'Tis here the Satan tempts the Christ,
As once he tempted man.
And shall he triumph, as on Eden's field?
Will here the mightier Adam cast away his shield?

Why gaze we with such wishful eyes
That keenest strife upon?
Why sing we, when, to nether skies,
The baffled fiend has gone?
For us the fight is won, the victory wrought,
Whose issues stretch beyond the loftiest reach of thought!

Our hearts, forlorn and troubled, need
A tender priest and true,
Mighty with God to intercede,
But kind and human too;
And Christ, in this his desert hour, reveals
The arm of conq'ring strength, the heart which warmly feels.

Vainly *he* tells of wound or scar
Who ne'er took sword in hand;
Idly *he* speaks of ocean's war
Who sees it from the strand.
The "visage marred" begets the sense of pain;
Our own tears give the power all other tears t' explain.

So, Jesus! in this school of scorn,
Though thou wert Son Divine,
The whispered sin, the troubling thorn,
The thought of shame were thine.
"Tempted in all points." Be thy name adored
For this true humanness—our Brother, Saviour, Lord!

Loving and faithful! we require
Nothing apart from thee;
Anointed by this chrism of fire
Our true High Priest we see;
And boldly venture through life's wildering maze,
Brave because thou, O Christ, didst tread the self-same ways.

When perils round us threat'ning hang,
Or arduous duties press,
And yielding flesh would 'scape the pang,
Or make the trouble less,
By coward means, we think of Him who bore,
And spurned the unhallowed thought in ages long before.

When oft the harassed soul around
Presumption spreads her snares,
And captive leads the spirit, bound
With chain of needless cares;
"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord"—this word of power
Our souls shall weapon through the dark, deceitful hour.

And when the Tempter, bolder grown,
Suggests the atheist lie,
And bids us, at his Moloch-throne,
To pay our homage high,
Humble, but dauntless, through our Lord's defense,
We speak the words rebuking—Satan, get thee hence!

Most grateful in the desert lone
The rock its shadow flings;
Most gentle where the grass is mown
The dew its coolness brings;
And, after struggle, to the wearied breast
Earth hath no paradise so sweet as perfect rest.

So when the demon-thoughts are fled,
Angels come trooping down
To fan the brow, and lift the head,
And bring the palm and crown;
We see the vision, hear the approval given;
The Master smiles "Well done," and in that smile is heaven.

Lent.

III.

And it shall come to pass in that day that the light shall not be clear, nor dark; but it shall be one day which shall be known unto the Lord, not day, nor night; but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.—ZECHARIAH xiv, 6, 7.

FIERCE through the land the invader sweeps,
As sudden from the glacier-steeps,
The avalanche in fury leaps.

Sad silence in her banquet-halls,
Confusion on her leaguered walls,
Darkly the curse on Judah falls.

Their fathers' graves the stranger owns,
All plaintive are the minstrel tones,
For "none take pleasure in her stones."

On every heart there comes the blight
Of wish, almost of hope. No sight
Of sun or star—dim, troubled light.

"Not clear, nor dark," the Lord hath said,
A gleam through angry clouds o'erhead,
A dull gray morning, flecked with red.

Who knows not this? To us 'tis given
Into this desert to be driven,
Faint hope on earth, faint glimpse of heaven.

No trust, no power to see the best,
Dark fears too vague to be expressed,
A feverish gasping after rest.

Not hopeless "dark," but O! "not clear,"
How oft the fitful lights appear
Which burn for mortal guidance here!

Then from the depths we cry afar
If haply some kind Bethlehem-star
Will lead us where our mercies are;

And the Lord's presence brings its balm,
As on the ancient lake a calm.
We hush the sob, we raise the psalm.

"Known to the Lord:" this gospel will
All our unrestful murmurs still,
Our hearts with patient gladness fill.

If he, our Saviour, knows our pain,
Each wearying hour, each sad refrain,
Shall end in joy, as clouds in rain.

And if the shadows denser frown,
And clasp us like an ebon crown—
They break before the sun goes down.

"At even, light," the promise runs—
Bright as with pomp of many suns,
Whispered to God's beloved ones.

As lightning from the tempest torn,
So, ere the night a newer morn
Is from the gathering darkness born.

Bursts upon even-tide the day,
The shadows are dispersed for aye,
The crimson glows above the gray.

Ne'er is that westering splendor past;
To heaven's own noon it broadens fast,
And while God liveth it shall last.

Lent.

IV.

And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush.—Exodus iii, 3, 4.

GREAT are thy works, O God! and sought
Of those who fix their kindling thought
On thy all-wise designs;
Deeper the rev'rent wonder grows,
Deeper the sense of sweet repose,
As, in thy ways, thy tireless goodness shines.

Happy the men who, while the tide
Of life flows on, can "turn aside"
Thy purpose to discern!
So, timely-curious, Moses came
To gaze upon the fronds of flame—
The bush, whose red leaves flourish while they burn.

The brooklet murmured in its bed,
The flocks in patient silence fed,
As o'er the plain he trod;
Startled to watch the unwonted fire,
Nor guessing, as it leaped the higher,
That in its midst was shrined the hidden God.

This morn like other morns had seemed;
Of naught the musing Shepherd dreamed
Beyond the common round;
When bursts upon his dazzled eyes
Of that "great sight" the quick surprise,
And the Voice bade him rev'rence "holy ground."

'Tis often thus. Life's duteous deeds
Are steps by which "the angel" leads
To "greater things than these:"
As Simon from Tiberias' breast
Was summoned by his Lord's behest
Of the new Gospel-realm to hold the keys.

O, not from far—beneath—above
We vainly quest incarnate Love;
God all around we see;
Though banished into dreariest wild,
The Father talketh with the Child—
His holy place the one lone desert tree.

The stammered word, the slender praise,
The poor, the young, the friendless raise,—
The homage, long delayed,
He will not e'er reject with scorn,—
He, who of old the wilding thorn
In Midian's waste His bright pavilion made.

What angel word, what mystic sign
Revealed the hidden Guest divine,
By earth and heaven adored,
We know not; but a look, a tone,
A blessing, made the Godhead known:
Christ spake but "Mary," and she knew the Lord.

The light is born out of the dark;
Then let us humbly wait and hark
For whisper or for word:
The grandest message of God's lips,
His most sublime apocalypse,
Oft from the fiercest heart of flame is heard.

Not ours to grieve, not ours to choose
The way in which the heavenly news
Our spirits shall inspire!
Welcome or pain, or awe, or fear,
If but our honored souls may hear
Thy voice, O Lord! though thou shalt speak "by fire."

Lent.

V.

The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.—John xii, 23-28.

THE hour is come! 'tis thus He wakes
His followers from their feverish dream;
And his high purpose to redeem,
Forth on the startled silence breaks.

Who can the loving mystery read?
Glory and death! O wedlock strange!
Can anguish thus to honor change?
Do martyrs triumph while they bleed?

Doth joy, the truant, lurk in pain?
Is life concealed in bitter cup?
How can fair visions kindle up
From panting heart and burdened brain?

Gaze the disciples on their Lord.
No wonder that their asking eyes,
Which court, the while they dread, replies,
Should long for some assuring word.

But denser darkness settles down.
The human fear, the human will,
New agonies impending still—
The mystery of the Father's frown.

Dark earth, blue heaven all clouded o'er,
The strange and lonely strife with sin—
O, ne'er was kingdom ushered in
By heralds sad as these before!

The highest glory is not where,
'Mid crimson clouds, the fight is won;
'Tis to reclaim the erring son,
Long used the sinful yoke to bear.

Better to clothe with corn the wild
Than track the fire-path of a star;
Less the proud sons of science are
Than clown who saves a drowning child.

Through death the world is raised above
Its alien curse and kindred dust;
We on the cross read, "God is just,"
But in the offering, "God is love."

The wheaten corn which falls and dies,
In autumn's plenty richly waves;
So, from the loathsome place of graves,
With Christ, our elder, we may rise.

From death comes life. The hand of God
This direst curse to good transforms;
So purest air is born of storms;
So bursts the harvest from the clod.

The highest benedictions hide
Where sacrifice is pure and true;
And our poor self-denials, too,
If done for Christ, in him abide.

But hark! the trouble breaks in prayer,
As billows on the patient beach!
O tell us, Jesus, how to reach
The marvel and the comfort there!

Some brave ones, who thy name confessed,
Have tossed away their lives in sport,
And gone to death, as kings to court,
And hailed him with wild words of jest.

But we this high excitement lack,
And shrink from pain, and droop in loss,
And only want to bear the cross,
When *Thou* hast placed it on the back.

And Thou our pattern art, not they;
And thou hast wept: then we may grieve
Some joy to lose, some friend to leave,
Into the darkness gone away.

When all life's light is in eclipse,
"O, if thou canst, my Father, spare!"
These accents of thy garden-prayer
Will quiver from imploring lips.

But if the cup from which we shrink
Thou dost forbid to pass away,
Then help us from the heart to say,
"My Father wills it, I must drink."

Braver to feel "Thy will be done,"
Because we first had cried aloud:
We see the rainbow in the cloud,
We know beyond it shines the sun.

Easter.

I.

Very early in the morning they came to the sepulchre. . . . Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.—LUKE xxiv. 1, 5, 6.

IS early morn. "Come, cross the brook,
The Kedron *He* so lately crossed,
In hope—'tis all we can—to look
Once more upon the 'Loved and Lost.'

"These smiling flowers, by spring arrayed,
The winter of our grief renew;
For in the tomb, where Christ is laid,
Our faith, alas! is buried too.

"'We trusted,'—'twas a pleasant dream,
By rudest waking overthrown,—
'That He our Israel would redeem,'
And, peerless, reign on Salem's throne.

"That hope is gone; but memory cleaves
In blissful trance to Jesus yet,
And through her tears still sits and weaves
The past into one long regret.

"Come where those funeral olives wave,—
The city sleeps, the morn is fair;—
Love yearns to see the garden-grave—
Come, let us weep and worship there."

Thus, as their mighty sorrow spoke,
Forth the true-hearted women went:
Then the unhoped-for morning broke
Upon their night of discontent.

Not always bending o'er the urn
Of missed and mourned ones should we lie;
When sorrow doth to duty turn,
Strong consolation waiteth by.

Grieving for Christ all griefs above,
Who by the grave stand, meek and dumb,
With troubled faith, but constant love,
To *them* the visioned angels come.

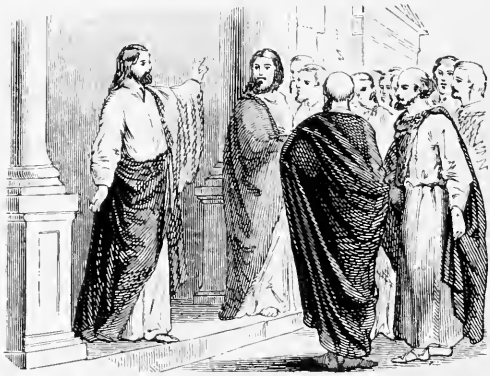
Hark! how the sounds their hearts revive!
"Not here, but risen," as he said;
"The Lord ye love is yet alive—
Why seek the living 'mong the dead?"

Glad news! and not alone for those
Who gathered round that sacred place;
Like some rich river's song it flows;
A gospel for a ruined race.

O, oft from out the darkest mine
A costlier gem the toiler bears;
O, oft the heavenliest hope can shine,
Struck from the heart of old despairs.

Jesus is risen! Silent now,
Not frantic, are the tears we weep
O'er glazing eye, and marble brow,
And dear ones in the dreamless sleep.

Jesus is risen! The fight is o'er;
Death to his own destruction hurled;
Man from the heaven is barred no more;
Easter hath dawned upon the world.



Easter.

II.

They returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment.—LUKE xxiii, 56.

WHEREFORE should those hands of love
Their fragrant work forbear?
Such task as theirs will mount above,
Like incense of a prayer;
If they should falter or suspend
'Twere treason to that matchless Friend,
Who, loving, "loved them to the end."

Nay, do not those true hearts the wrong
Their affluent love to doubt;
The heart-fires which have burned so long
Have not at once gone out;
Love born of Love forever will
The life with generous pulses fill,
Surviving scorn, and shame, and ill.

"They rested," as did He, when first,
Obedient to his hand,
The light on formless darkness burst,
And at his high command
Celestial beauty clothed the wild,
And stars in ordered courses smiled
On earth—God's work; and man—his child.

"They rested,"—'twas a higher law
Which bade them thus delay,
And moved their ling'ring feet to draw
From that new tomb away;
God spake the broad command before,—
"Duty than sacrifice is more;
Better to serve than to deplore."

"Spices and ointments,"—priceless these
Poor symbols of regard;
And He who reads the human sees,
Nor fails he to reward;
But love hath struck its deepest chord,
When, rather than embalm the Lord,
"They rested," to obey his word.

"They rested," thoughtless of the meed
The first day's morn would bring;
Nor dreamed that from such painful seed
Such harvest e'er could spring;
When lo! upon their doubting eyes
Forth flashed the Easter's rare surprise,—
"Jesus is risen—ye shall rise."

"They rested." God's will is the best,
And resurrection nears,
When quiet trust in mourning breast
Can take the place of tears;
They in whose hearts proud waters toss,
The Marys, pierced with keenest loss,
Must not lie weeping 'neath the cross.

And we, who in this later time
  Their grief and promise heir,
May for like exercise sublime
  Our counseled souls prepare;
Eager to work, but calm to wait,
Till at hot noon, or sunset late,
The pale horse standeth at the gate.

Easter.

III.

There came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight.—John xix, 39.

S swiftly flies the startled dove
When some keen danger swoops above,
And shelters 'neath the friendly eaves,
Careless of all the joy she leaves:
By new and sore disquiet pressed,
So comes to Christ a noble guest,
Perplexed 'twixt earnestness and fear,
Half longing—half afraid—to hear.

He comes by night. Not his to brook
The with'ring of the scorner's look,
The cynic banter, gay and loud,
The wonder of the gibing crowd,
The burst of fierce or haughty spleen,
Which fain would crush the Nazarene;
Not daring yet these storms to meet,
He comes at night with stealthy feet.

Blame ye the ruler that he shrank
From tainted name and forfeit rank?
Think ye that such strong need of soul
Should spurn the sense's base control,

And bear the victor-spirit through,
With manful haste, to dare and do,
Accounting all the world but loss,
To find the truth, and clasp the cross?

Ah! think how faintly *you* have borne;
How oft your plighted troth forsworn;
How, when the flick'ring slanders fell,
You whispered your unkind farewell;
How you forsook, denied, betrayed;
Foul traitor to the vows you made—
And while these wraiths before you stand,
Pause ere you fix the coward's brand.

The shadows fall of that dread hour,
"Of darkness" the supremest "power,"
When in red clouds the sun has died,
And Nature owns the Crucified:
Where are the bold disciples fled?
Why haste they not to claim their dead?
For while they nurse their grief and gloom,
The *cowards* lay him in the tomb.

There is a courage braver far
Than charges in the ranks of war,
Or leaps to hear the cannon's boom,
Or speeds with patriot pride to doom.
A hardy frame of well-knit nerves
The soldier's purpose amply serves,
And speeds the thinning phalanx on
When banners trail, and hope is gone.

But warriors oft have backward turned
When folly laughed, or passion burned;
Scared from the right by witling's blame,
Have let small sneers their manhood shame.
So on Gilboa's rainless field
The monarch "casts away his shield."
So Samson, when his lusts invite,
Turns craven in the moral fight.

Let God inspire! then weak are strong,
And cowards chant the battle-song;
He, whose approach the darkness hides,
Stands fast when all the world derides;
'Mid fiercest fires the generous youth
Is valiant for the living truth;
And, martyred for the Saviour's sake,
Heroic woman clasps the stake.

We thank thee, Lord! when thou hast need
The man aye ripens for the deed;
And thou canst make the timid bold
To shed his fears as dross from gold;
And, nerved from heaven, nor droop nor quail,
Though worlds confront, and hell assail.
O breathe, in this and every hour,
On each, on me, this soul of power!

Easter.

IV.

Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.—JOHN xvi, 17, 18.

HAT is it that He saith?
That He, who our deep love so oft hath bidden
To cling and gather round him, must be hidden
From all but faith?

That, through the happy days,
We shall be no more tranced with wondrous story,
Nor see God's love and man's blend, like a glory,
Whene'er we gaze?

Not to behold him, when
We longed and hoped to see him sceptered rather;
And only when he "goeth to the Father,"
See him again?

"A little while!" to gain
The knowledge to o'er-master life and sorrow,
And then to languish in one hopeless morrow
Of length'ning pain?

A while! and then the end?
One flash, and then the utter dark, forever;
How the poor heart-strings ache in the endeavor
To comprehend!

We know not what he saith!
His words are riddles, true and tender mostly;
There runs a shudd'ring through them, like some ghostly
Shadow of death.

We too, ask, What is this?
When o'er some ruined hope we weep and wonder,
Or when some spirit-summons bids us sunder
From all our bliss.

What! called so soon to part
With fortune's rapture, and with love's caressing,
With all those dews of life which fall in blessing
On the parched heart!

Moan like the passing bells
The wail of weary souls which linger, aching;
The hollow sound of all life's music, breaking
In sad farewells.

A while! a little while!
Sigh of crushed hearts, in homes bereft and lonely,
For one brief holiday of summer only
Able to smile.

O for the power to rest!
Till to each soul God whispers his revealing,
Calming, as rain on waves, each angered feeling,
"What is, is best."

Sense sobs o'er graves, and mourns
Each cypress-garland, twined for love's undoing!
Faith—a bright prophet—sees its youth renewing
Within the urns.

For though the loved ones died
In slow decay, or scathed by swifter lightning;
'Twas but that in a noon-tide, ever brightening,
They might abide.

Faith always sees them now,
Because they are within the Father's presence,
And endless youth, of heaven the radiant essence,
Brightens each brow.

Easter.

V.

The time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father.—John xvi, 25.

S travelers o'er some darksome waste
Their blind and perilous progress urge,
And fear to stay, and fear to haste,
While mists hang o'er the mountain's verge;
And earth is wrapt in midnight shroud,
Or some faint streak of moonlight struggles through the cloud;

As children, guessing day by day
Life's many riddles, new and strange;
Before whom pass, as in a play,
All motley characters of change;
Some, monstrous, filling with affright,
Some waking each new power in credulous delight;

So, wildered traveler, wondering child,
Each soul its way through life inquires,
Now lost in moorland, now beguiled
By passion's dancing meteor fires;
Longing itself to understand,
And feeling, like the blind, for some near guiding hand.

We strive, and profit not with strife;
Are weary with our torturing woe;
The passionate secret of all life
We only guess, we long to *know*.
More light! O from what depths we cry,
Let the white truth blaze on us ere we droop and die!

For now we blindly fear and love,
By partial knowledge lured astray,
Nor deem those woodland boughs above,
'Neath which we stroll through summer's day,
In such a wanton fullness twine,
They shut out from our eyes the blue of heaven divine.

Our nature does not bound our want;
And stunned by this perpetual roar,
Poor baffled ones! we sob and pant,
And sigh for some eternal shore;
Each heart chafes like a moaning sea;
And who shall still its storm? our Father, who but thee?

But from a happy place shine out
Rays of a large majestic hope,
And a Christ's voice, rebuking doubt,
Gives to our faith its widest scope:
"No more in proverbs will I speak,
But plainly show your hearts the Father whom ye seek."

'Tis morning now! the dark hath fled,
Seared by the venturous dawn away.
More light! see how the glorious red
Breaks on the soul and brings the day!
"We follow on to know the Lord,"
And in heaven's endless noon shall find our rich reward.

Easter.

VI.

Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me.—Acts i, 8.

ORD, wilt thou now the throne restore,
And raise our Israel from the dust?
Brave words! which seemed as if they bore
Naught meaner than the patriot trust.

But He who knows how subtle stains,
As breath on mirrors, mar the mind,
Unbraids each motive's tangled skeins,
And shows the lust which lurks behind.

"Ye shall have power." The answer probes
The longing of each heart in turn;
Knew he that 'neath those peasant-robes
Desires for thrones were wont to burn?

"Ye shall have power;" but not of kings,
Or those who march through blood to fame·
"The power the dove-like Spirit brings
To witness through the world my Name."

O waking rude from pompous dream!
No loud acclaim, no judge's throne,
No laurels, won amid the gleam
Of serried ranks, and foes o'erthrown.

Not these! but triumphs nobler far
Than bards have sung, or wealth has priced;
To bring, as Magi to the star,
The vassal-world to bow to Christ!

The gift of power! not surely poured
The heart's imperious pride to feed,
Nor yet for selfish ends to hoard,
As wealth inflames a miser's greed.

For vaunt and avarice shear the hair,
In which the Samson's valor lies,
And force him, in his blind despair,
To play the mime to heathen eyes.

Men may not rest, though sleep be sweet,
With 'wild'ring dreams which mount to heaven;
For God hath need of tireless feet,
Forth on the soul's strong purpose driven.

Life is too short for holy trance,
While ruin round us works its woe;
On Tabor's crest the glory-glance
But nerved for sterner strife below.

Well might the angels court eclipse
Of all heaven's brightness for a space,
In barter for those witness-lips
Which burn with news of gospel-grace!

And we are heirs of work so high,
So rounded with all thoughts of bliss,
That minstrels of the upper sky
Have learned no chant so sweet as this.

Easter.

VII.

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. —John xiv, 1.

Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? —Luke xxiv, 38.

CLOSER to Christ the loved ones grew,
The world seemed heaven when he was nigh;
Their raptured life no future knew,
Nor dreamed they one so loved could die;
And when he spoke of parting, O! the quail
And stoop of the bruised heart, as stunned by mighty hail.

Like the stern silence, dread as death,
'Twixt lightning-flash and thunder-peal;
So sudden grief, which held the breath,
But strung the boding sense to feel;
And on the giddy brain, like funeral knells,
Beat heavy, all in one, a life-time of farewells.

But on that silence, drear and blank,
Fell looks of love and words of cheer;
As tears of eve, on daisied bank,
Fall in the childhood of the year;
"Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe
In God, believe in me." Faith cannot hopeless grieve.

Again they met. The tragic hour
With life-long wound their hearts had scarred,
But memory held—the orphan's dower—
The likeness of the "visage marred."
With doors shut on the world, in upper room,
They spoke, now of lost hope, now of forsaken tomb.

They brooded in a wayward grief
Which wrestled with a trembling love;
Vassals of giant unbelief,
Dark'ning their loftiest thoughts above;
When on their sight a radiant Presence came,
And a remembered voice seemed breathing each one's name.

O strange that when our blessings come
We scarce can pierce their vailed disguise!
They stood affrighted all and dumb,
As if joy smote their aching eyes
With blindness; till the words a calmness made,
"'Tis I—why are ye troubled? why your thoughts afraid?"

Two soothing words! The grave between.
Who can withstand the appealing grace!
It stilled the sorrow that had been
By sight of that familiar face,
Which, ere they yet had broken on the soul,
Spoke to the waters proud—"But thus far shall ye roll."

Before and after death alike,
He bids us cease our trouble yet;
Nor sword can pierce, nor anguish strike
The sealed on whom His is set.
Teach us the lesson, Lord! at once to flee,
From trouble into faith—from wavering faith to thee.

Whitsuntide.

Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language. —Genesis xi, 7.

We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.—Acts ii, 11.

STATELY on Shinar's ancient plain
Uprose a mighty thought in stone;
The thinkers scoffed in pure disdain
Of forces mightier than their own.
Full many a moon had waxed and waned,
Full many a brain and hand had striven,
To pile a tower, which, unrestrained
By bound or bar, should smite the heaven.

For Thought had brooded calm and long,
And grew of its own offspring proud;
And Labor brought his sinews strong,
And Art her children—cunning-browed;
And deathless Will and deathless Pride
Bade scorn the earth, and brave the sky,
Till they, who all their peers outvied,
Should now with their Creator vie.

Then came the injured Godhead down,
And cursed them with an alien speech;
And from the thunder of his frown
Afar they wandered—each from each.
But in the curse a blessing lurked;
From baffled language nations grew;
And thus the wrath of Heaven hath worked
The purpose of its mercy too.

Years rolled away. Three empires vast
Had queened and faded, one by one;
A fourth had reached its prime, and cast
The purple of its setting sun;
When, as a whirlwind from the north
Awes the bowed forest in its ire,
Twelve chosen men came boldly forth,
With hearts of faith and "tongues of fire."

No haughty Cesars from their thrones
With cohort fierce and lictor's rod;
These have no weapons, save the tones
Of voices strong with words of God.
But to men's hearts those voices leap,
And pierce through all their guarded lies,
Till, like a world aroused from sleep,
They feel the baptism of the skies.

They come from far—from sunny shores,
Which o'er the proud Ægean smile;
From regions where th' Orontes pours
Through the rich plain for many a mile;

A motley crowd of diverse name!
But on *each* startled list'ner rung,
Impetuous from the lips of flame,
God's wonders in his *native* tongue.

Thus Love can every doom reverse,
Restore the good long mourned as lost,
E'en as the ancient Babel's curse
Died at the breath of Pentecost.
And teeming brain and lissom hand,
By breath of heavenly grace controlled,
May work and win, at God's command,
More than the builders dreamt of old.

O for the lambent fire to fall,
To purge the vile, the weak to nerve!
So when the clarion-voices call
We shall be meet to build or serve.
Come, Holy Ghost! with cleansing power,
When thou from pride our hearts hast shriven,
Then, blameless, we may rear the tower,
Whose topmost stone shall reach to heaven.

Trinity.

I.

Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. EPHESIANS ii, 18.

ATHER! from all things marred and base
In this, our darkling dwelling-place,
We lift our eyes to seek thy face.

We wait thy sov'reign will to learn,
Our life thy favor fain would earn,
Our hearts for thy sweet soothing yearn.

For thee the bending nations groan;
So wild, so strong their wailing tone,
No voice can hush them but thine own.

For there is naught that satisfies
In "refuges of" builded "lies;"
The earth hath failed. Men ask the skies.

The world is full of doubt and jar,
Red-handed hate and wasteful war;
All mail hath dint; all flesh hath scar.

And thought is rebel; and desire
Alternate smolders and leaps higher,
Like some half-dead volcano's fire.

E'en as for rain the cedars pant,
E'en as the harts the brooklets haunt;
Men heave and throb with mighty want.

We covet knowledge. Keen our guess
When mysteries oft, or questions press;
Until we ache from weariness.

We faint with thirst. We die unseen.
All truth hath but the mirage been,
False as the fabled Hippocrene.

The rival systems bend their brows,
Eager their zealot prides to rouse.
We know not where to pay our vows.

Then from the search we recreant flee;
Still chafing like a hungry sea,
That we may reach Thy throne and Thee.

But as the passionate currents flow,
They break upon one strand of woe,
Moaning the unknown God to know.

O Lord! thou must thyself declare!
We may not climb on broken stair
Of faultless creed or formal prayer.

Encumbered with our earthly load,
We cannot tread the star-strewn road,
Which leads to thy divine abode.

Show us Thyself! none else prevail.
Earth's mightiest with the effort fail,
And tremor shakes the seraph's vail.

Drooping and furled each angel-wing;
The silenced elders cease to sing;
All heaven is hushed before the King.

God only can of God proclaim,
Without presumptuous guilt and blame,
The glories of the hidden name.

But Love hath sent the Son to bleed,
And th' Eternal Spirit to plead;
God-furnished, for our creature need.

No longer must the poorest pine.
The gulf is bridged. The light divine
Broods o'er the lowliest human shrine.

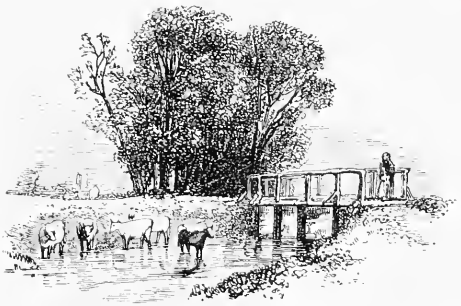
The holiest is no longer pent
From mortal view. The vail is rent.
God comes to every pilgrim's tent.

Father! we bless thee thou hast bowed,
For us, with thy rich grace endowed,
The vailing heavens, and scattered cloud.

O Saviour dear! we fain would tell,
In lip and life's hosanna-swell,
Thy praises, blest Immanuel!

And, in coequal praise, repeat
Our life-long worship at thy feet,
Divine and gracious Paraclete!

One God in Persons three! We pour
In heaven's full cup our meaner store,
And silent in thy light adore.



Trinity.

II.

Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.—ISAIAH vi, 5.

UPON the temple's glittering floors
A pure, unwonted radiance pours;
On court and column downward rolled
The gathering waves of glory break;
Till all things from their luster take
Or hues of things divine, or shapes of heavenly mold.

Prostrate, as if the blaze had drowned
All other sense of sight or sound,
The prophet lay in sudden swoon;
As Eastern travelers, when they press
Through the vast, palmless wilderness,
Faint 'neath the angry sun, or breath of fierce simoon.

What fearful sacrilege hath pressed
Upon that bowed, remorseful breast?
What nameless memory cleft the stroke?
While in the fretted arches' gleam
Waved the bright wings of seraphim,
And from celestial choirs the triple praises broke.

It is no sullen priest of Baal
Who smites the breast and lifts the wail;
The holiest man, the boldest seer,
Whose words the faithless people scathed,
Whose lips in fire divine were bathed,
God's child—God's prophet—lies in anguish here.

"Woe! woe is me! unclean, undone!
O hide me from yon flaming sun!
For God hath burst upon my sight;
And in that vision stands confessed
The vileness of my prided best;
As sunbeams show all faults within their line of light.

"Sin lurks in my distempered zeal,
And mars the off'ring when I kneel
Bending in lowliest orison;
I thought my prophet-lips were clean,
But I the Lord of Hosts have seen,
And blench and tremble in the pureness of the throne."

Not thus when new-born Adam roved
In that fair virgin Eden, groved
In loveliest harmony of shade;
Then earthly could with heavenly blend,
And man could talk with God, as friend
Looks into dear friend's face, nor knows to feel afraid.

Ah! it is thus the primal fall
Hath visited and cursed us all.
Our eyes for heavenly scenes are dim;
And, 'wildered, as in mortal trance,
We shiver at th' Almighty's glance,
And only through the cloud can bear to look on him.

In pure hearts faith is ever young;
'Tis from our sin our fear hath sprung,
And made unmeet with God t' abide;
Sinless, with wishful look and long,
We should greet God at even-song,
Nor from divine approach in bowers of Eden hide.

And yet some blessed symbols wait
With hope to cheer the desolate.
The angel from the altar flies,
Eager with touch of burning coal
To heal and cleanse the leprous soul;
Type of that blood divine which all salvation buys.

O, not in anger to consume!
Rather to teach, to bless, t' illume,
The lambent glories downward shine.
While, to dispel each ling'ring doubt,
The fire atoning ne'er goes out,
Symbol of sin confessed, and expiate' wrath divine.

Crushed 'neath the silence of rebuke,
We see that flame, and upward look
Within each consecrated fane;
So we with seraph-lips may vie,
And "Holy, holy, holy," cry,
Till our poor psalm shall blend with loftier angel-strain.

Trinity.

III.

How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty. —Zechariah ix, 17.

The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.—Psalm xxxiii, 5.

THERE are who say the world is drear,
A baffling maze of sin and pains,
Where mortals crouch in 'wild'ring fear,
And death o'er every homestead reigns;

A world where myriad voices scorn,
And myriad cavils mock reply;
And myriad men, to trouble born,
Exist to toil, and grieve, and die.

But earth is not a place of tombs,
In spite of all that cynics say,
For God hath shed forth balms and blooms
To heal the plague and scent the way.

And tribute rich and ample hoard
Bear witness to rebuke the wrong;
And Nature vindicates her Lord
In buoyant life and woodland song.

FELTER

On the same soil the harvest waves,
Into whose heart the tempest wore;
And, while men bend by wintry graves,
The swift spring hastes to grass them o'er.

So, wandering on the solemn hills,
Which look upon some boundless plain,
Besprent with flowers, and gay with rills,
Which laugh like things unused to pain;

Or gazing on some landscape large,
With glade, and stream, and silent tower,
While from the far horizon's marge
Swells the old sea's great sound of power;

A presence seems to lurk in each:
And, like a gospel pure and kind,
Their silence, eloquent as speech,
Hath lessons to the listening mind,

Of comfort, learned from cottage fires;
Of peace, from Nature's dreamless rest;
Of faith, from heaven-pointing spires;
Of endless life, from ocean's breast;

Of sweet communion with the dead,—
(The precious living loved not less,
For they the golden streets who tread
Watch not to envy, but to bless;)—

Taught by the way the still earth leans,
  Half-wearied, on the clasping sky,
Like some sly child, who, ling'ring, means
  To claim close favors by and by;

Of duty, taught by each fair thing,
  Which works its Maker's high desire,
By streams which flow and birds which sing,
  And know not to repine nor tire;

Of God—for all the landscape fair,
  The azure heaven, the cloudlet dim,
The rip'ning fields, the moorland bare,—
  All have a word to speak for Him.

O for an inner ear, to hark
  Each whisper of this under-song!
O for brave will, to learn and mark,
  And grow for grief or service strong!

Trinity.

IV.

There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.—LUKE xv, 10.

THERE are would earth and heaven divorce,
And sunder every tie
Which binds our sphere, in mystic force,
To that far throne beyond the course
Of orbs in yonder sky.

And skeptics, white with angry foam,
Their scornful lips have curled;
Deriding those who fain would roam
To find, and fill with hopes of home,
This orphan of a world.

Not thus the pitying angels lean
From their calm seats above;
They watch with kindly eyes and keen,
And long some struggling soul to screen
In ministry of love.

Heaven loves the ruined to redeem;
As noblest hearts below
Light up, with tenderest vigil-gleam,
O'er those whose flatt'ring childhood's dream
Hath lost its morning glow.

For Love is full of love to all,
Yet loves the weakest most:
The one in peril, or in thrall,
Whose wine of life has turned to gall,
Hath larger share engrossed.

The shepherd will the flock forsake,
Safe in the fold abiding,
To wander through ravine and brake,
Homeward the one stray lamb to take;
Nor break its heart with chiding.

The sire in calm emotion dwells
Where quiet home-fires burn;
But his deep love in floods upwells
When from deserted pleasure-cells
The prodigals return.

The stream in languid ripples flows
In summers through the wood;
But if, by long stern winter froze,
Released, in cataract haste it throws
Its waves in living flood.

And sorrow gives to fading things
A memory always green;
As parting birds have brightest wings;
As music over churchyards rings,
And breaks o'er graves between.

O! if in hearts forlorn as ours
We keep the choicest gift,
The sunniest smiles, the rarest flowers,
From shadowed hearts and painful hours
Their shade and pain to lift:

The angels, kinder far than we,
Of heavenlier joy are heirs,
When from their thrones they stoop to see
Some brave ones battling to be free
From sinful curse and cares.

The purest bliss the angels share
Is o'er a world forgiven.
O mystery beyond compare!
Earth's joy and sorrow vibrate there,
And pity brightens heaven.

Trinity.

V.

Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.—PSALM xxxvii, 1–6.

HO would not learn a lore like this,
By some sweet psalmist taught?
And rest in calm content of bliss,
Without unquiet thought?

And yet our restless hearts, perplexed
With secrets strange or fell,
And oft with righteous anger vexed,
Are eager to rebel.

"Not fret," when men of prosperous wrong
In gilded chariots ride!
When trampled weak and tyrant strong
On every hand abide!

When, now with rage, and now with boast,
The hot world cheats the way,
And wreckers hoist, on iron coast,
False lights to lure astray!

When perjured lives, with wasteful prayers,
Their sordid aims can leaven,
As one should turn to fiery glares
God's rainbows out of heaven!

When wicked, in their power secure,
God's justice seem t' arraign!
Were it not weakness to endure?
Dishonor to refrain?

Like songs in storms, the calm command
Still sounds, "Fret not thy soul,
Nor wrath nor envy understand
The mystery of the whole."

Why should the stately oak complain
That grass hath earlier spring,
When centuries yet of sun and rain
Will hail the forest king?

For it will through long summers hide
The woodland songsters blithe,
When the frail grasses at its side
Have fallen by the scythe.

Wherefore all helpless angers curb,
All murmuring envies still:
"The wicked," like the blasted herb,
"Shall wither" when He will.

Large charity will lift thee soon
To breathe diviner air,
Where flowers, as of an endless June,
The Beulah-gardens bear.

Delight in God shall make thee spread
Such influence through thy gloom,
As when some hidden violets shed
Their riches of perfume.

"Commit thou all thy way to God,"
Then let the slanderers bark;
He brings it forth, who flings abroad
The noontide from the dark.

The gem which decks some royal hand
In darkness was impearled;
And thou canst wait, that thou may'st stand
God's own before the world.

Trinity.

VI.

We know all things work together for good to them that love God. —Romans viii, 28.

FAITH speaks, while sense is dumb and sad,
Of all life's strange confusions weary,
Dreading, though fireside eyes are glad,
Lest following morns break cold and dreary;
But Faith, with prescient vision blest,
Paints shining morrows in the West.

All nature longs to be assured;
Suspense is torture to the feeling;
The deadliest ill can be endured
If trouble be not past annealing;
And faith, like some alchemist old,
Can turn base metals into gold.

And God hath said, "To loving souls
All things for good shall work together."
From heart to heart the promise rolls;
As song-birds, 'mid the scented heather,
From nest to nest the strain prolong,
Till air is filled with balm and song.

'Tis He hath said it, from whose hand
Comes all this bounteous world's providing;
Whose love in equal grace hath planned
A kingdom's or a sparrow's guiding;
Who marks the proud sun when he sets,
And feeds the orphan ravenlets.

And He can do whate'er he wills,
The worlds are all his vassal-forces;
Each vast domain his influence fills,
He binds the stars in lambent courses,
And when the storm its wildest raves
He speaks a silence on the waves.

O not in vain doth He create
Aught from his affluent love proceeding;
The meanest hath appointed state,
If only for the mightiest's needing;
The meteor and the thunder-stone
Have use and mission of their own.

Christ hath not to his people sworn
Blue heavens where summer glories sparkle,
But foreheads crowned, like his, with thorn,
And paths where shadowy winters darkle;
Yet ever hath the promise stood,
"All things together work for good."

And blessedness is highest life;
When God's will all our will absorbeth;
As stars which braved the midnight strife
Die when the glorious morning orbeth;
And when we feel, 'mid threat'ning harms,
The clasp of his encircling arms.

Faith! rest thou here, whate'er befall:
The blighted hope; the serpent-slander;
The plague-swept household; or the call
O'er the returnless waves to wander.
The fires which kindle sevenfold
But burn the dross to prove the gold.

Trinity.

VII.

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.—JAMES v, 13.

AND in hand through all our ways
Joy and sorrow travel,
Making life a tangled maze
We may not unravel;
E'er at work to build or mar,
Like unsocial twins they are,
Wreathing smile, or striking scar.

Fleet of foot and wide of range,
On each trav'ler goeth;
Like experience of change
Every spirit knoweth:
Whisper soft, or brawling loud,
Zephyr sometimes, sometimes cloud;
Here the bridal—there the shroud.

Warp and woof of many threads
Time is always weaving;
Year to year he sternly weds,
Heedless of our grieving;
Blending, in his ceaseless loom,
Joy's bright crimson to illume
Sable shades of doubt and doom.

When the sorrow blights our good,
Do we chafe—repining?
Or discern, 'neath cloak and hood,
Angel form outshining?
Swell our hearts as swells the tide?
Do we in locked chambers hide
Serpent craft or lion pride?

When joy's summer glories smite
Do they bless or blind us?
Doth the pure celestial light
Proud or thankful find us?
Doth some brief delirium dupe?
Brief as dew in flower-cup,
Which the hot world drinketh up?

Blest to whom God shows his grace
Hallowing all their trouble!
Those to whom his lifted face
Makes their gladness double!
Commerce with the skies can teach
Gospels beyond common reach—
Blessedness too rare for speech.

Nature in her worst unrest
Spoken sorrow beareth,
And when grief is unexpressed
Only then despaireth;
Hearts will break which cannot weep;
Tears repressed from eyelids keep
All the happy dews of sleep.

Winds, which whisper to the woods,
Joyous hearts resemble;
They would fain in gladdest moods
Into language tremble;
One can never *quite* rejoice;
Without some dear answering voice
Eden hath not half its joys.

Hearts which glow, and hearts which bleed,
God for each one careth;
Outlet for their strongest need
He for each prepareth;
In restraint no longer pent;
Joy in bursts of song hath vent;
Sorrow prays, and is content.

O for hearts of finer tone
Help of Heaven to borrow!
Be *our* joys in praises shown,
And in prayer our sorrow;
Till, like priests for service stoled,
Awed as radiant clouds unfold,
We shall God himself behold.

Trinity.

VIII.

All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee.
PSALM cxlv, 10.

HEN art has grasped some graceful dream,
The artificer's fame is fed;
'Mid blaze of song some ling'ring gleam
Will play around the poet's head.

As by rare skill, or rarer gift,
Men their own meaner glories raise,
Ceaseless the worlds of God uplift
Their homage of perpetual praise.

One chant of life and beauty thrills
From wilding fern and stately tree;
'Tis thundered from the solemn hills,
And answered by th' exulting sea.

Upland the brooklet's music floats,
Each flower-cup bending to the tune;
The woodlands from a hundred throats
Hymn praise beneath the list'ning moon.

The countless stars which light the dark,
Tribes that with life the greensward leaven,
The air which vibrates, while the lark
Warbles of summer and of heaven;

Each pulse of light, each wave of sound,
  Each foresight shrewd, each wise design,
All swell, to the world's utmost bound,
  Praise to the forming Hand Divine.

Yet is it all *unconscious* praise,
  Struck from their nature, not from *them;*
As some old summer's buried rays
  Flash in a monarch's diadem.

Strong laws material forces bind,
  As captives held in prison bars;
The rev'rence of one baby-mind
  Is nobler than a million stars,

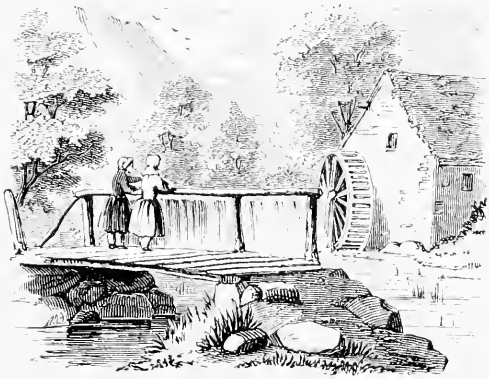
While fast the heedless seasons roll,
  Nor know the truths which they express,
All nature "praises,"—but the soul
  Of man—God's image—fain would bless!

Not like insensate nature, dumb
  Or tuneless, we our tribute pour:
O priceless privilege! We may come,
  And "bless" the God whom we adore!

Talk of his goodness in the ways,
  And lean upon his gracious hand;
Intelligently speak his praise,
  And learn his love to understand.

Blessing than praise is more. The heart
Sends its quick love to prompt the tongue,
And all its happy pulses start
While the full spirit-psalm is sung.

Let Nature in her Lord rejoice,
Harmonous worlds his praise proclaim!
We, with glad heart and willing voice,
Will "bless" him for his newest Name.



Trinity.

IX.

When he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the way-side watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God.—1 Samuel iv, 13.

ITH sightless eyes and silver hair
An old man watched and wept;
And vexed thoughts wand'ring into prayer
Within him strove and crept.

He watched, for now the warrior's plume
Waves in the distant war;
And clash of arms, and sonnd of doom,
Burden the breeze afar.

The way-side wand'rers paused to grieve
For pain too large to share,
All through the hours, till deep'ning eve,
He still sat "watching" there.

"Watching," as those who wake till dawn
Lest some dear sleep be stirred;
Distrustful, as some startled fawn,
A strayling from the herd.

Restless, as he who dreams that death
His argosy o'erwhelms;
Timid as hares, when evening's breath
Murmurs 'mid stately elms.

No truant thought averts the look
Strained straight toward the field;
With one dread wish to read the book
In mercy clasped and sealed.

The book is read. The courier lips
Are white with wrath of soul,
That such poor wrecks of gallant ships
On one lone strand should roll.

The patriot bows, like shaken tent,
'Neath blast of dire disgrace;
The judge outpours his sore lament
For Israel's evil case;

The father mourns the curse fulfilled,
Long spoken by the Lord,
And weeps o'er both his children, killed
Beneath one cruel sword.

Yet the strong soul bore nobly up
Until the heaviest stroke,
"The ark is lost." This filled the cup;
And then the brave heart broke.

There is great need for Elis yet,
As watchers through the dark,
In perilous times of conflict set,
To tremble for the ark.

Its foes, with vaunt and valor proud,
Bear it to Dagon's fane,
And hymn their fancied triumph loud,
With many a frantic strain;

Its friends are faint when duty calls,
And droop beneath their load;
And scorners on their temple walls
Have carven, "Ichabod."

And some have made the ark a shrine,
And some have woven charms,
That victory may espy the sign,
And wait upon their arms.

And some have sought for wizard gift,
Like that unkingly Saul;
And some, stretched Uzzah-hands, to lift
From an imagined fall.

And some, with ostentatious tramp,
To warning omens blind,
Have ta'en the ark into the camp,
But left its God behind.

Watch! watch! the subtle peril threats
The freedom of the bride;
The foe, unweary, ne'er forgets
His spirit-snares to hide.

Woe worth the day when Christian work
Is done by faithless hands;
In traitor's wile more dangers lurk
Than in Philistine bands.

The watchmen on the walls can guard
While marshaled armies wait;
But vain are sleepless watch and ward,
If treason opes the gate.

O for the strong-souled prophets, back
Our craven souls to cheer!
Whose fear of God constrained the lack
Of every meaner fear.

To arms! the martial shout prolong;
Unfurl the flag again;
Give battle to the false and wrong;
God needeth earnest men.

Trinity.

X.

When he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.—Luke xix, 41.

GLAD welcomes float around,
Palm-branches strew the ground;
Not only do the nameless few
Their plighted vows renew,
Ten thousand hearts shed homage, like a summer dew.

"Haste! and your tribute bring;
Behold our promised King!"
Straight each to each the tidings tells,
Till, like the joyous bells
Which ring for bridals, through Jerusalem it swells.

There's trouble on his brow;
Why throb the heart-strings now?
Now, when the world's acclaim he hears,
When seeming triumph nears,
Why do those kind eyes sadden into rain of tears?

Not for himself oppressed,
Though "marred" above the rest,
No passion e'er in him rebelled;
His heart's fierce storm he quelled,
As, by imperial law, old ocean's pride is held.

It was no selfish woe
Which bade his tears to flow;
But pity, when the glory fled
From Sion's sacred head;
And sorrow, when he, mourning, gazed on Lazarus dead.

Before him, as he passed,
Slept the fair city, glassed
In morning's mirror—clear and gray;
He saw th' advancing day
When pomp of wall and tower in shapeless ruin lay.

And, vision drearier far
Than earth's sad ruins are,
Souls which, in keenest wrath and scorn,
Had him, the Christ, forsworn,
He saw by headlong hate to hopeless ruin borne.

"If thou hadst known, e'en thou,"
Ere night had come; but now
No more the day-star woos thine eyes
With blush of orient skies;
'Tis night, and on that night no morn shall ever rise.

Still through the circling years
Those matchless, pitiful tears
Speak to us,—as the covenant sign,
Whose light-braids God doth twine,
Speaks in the heaven,—of love, which blends with power divine.

"He wept" for our sore loss,
The tears—before the cross;
Grief flowered into atoning deed,
He gave himself to bleed
That life from death might spring; safety from direst need.

His tears our weakness chide.
"He wept!" then we confide;
Distrust were fouler treason still
Against that loving will,
Which fain would clasp a world, and shield it from all ill.

"He wept!" then we should wail
Our fellows' blight and ail;
Be Jesus our high pattern yet!
Then we shall ne'er forget
He frankly canceled ours. Now ours *to all* the debt.

Trinity.

XI.

Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee and the other a publican.—LUKE xviii, 10.

WITH brow upraised, as one who sees his peers,
From some tall summit, dwarf to lesser size,
Free from all vulgar awe or feeble tears,
Courting all eyes

To gaze upon *his* eyes, alight with pride—
Behold the Pharisee! a statelier sort
Of man, not made of clay, fit to abide
In temple court,

As his own heart assured him. Bound to thanks
For duty done and life enjoyed, to God;
But not to wail o'er sin, like meaner ranks
Of common clod.

Proud as he passed, his eye's dilating globe
Fell on a poor wretch crouching in the aisle,
And, gathering up the fringes of his robe
From chance defile,

He to the altar strode with lordly scorn,
And spoke his thanks to self and God again,
For the rare privilege of not being born
"As other men."

Blind to the beauty of all high desire,
Content with husks, not fruit, he clung to form,
As one who blows white ashes of the fire,
Saying, "I'm warm."

* * * * * * * *

With eyes that sought the ground, and inly burned
With that dry sorrow which is keenest pain;
Longing for tears, if but "the clouds returned
After the rain;"

Crushed by the one large, deadly sense of sin
Fearing to look toward the holy place,
Lest he should find nor cleft to shelter in,
Nor smile of grace,

Came the poor sinner to the place of prayer;
Not with the voice of some exulting psalm,
But with dim, tremulous hope, which scarcely dare
Expect its balm.

The homeless, flying from the furious blast,
Heeds not the passer-by, although a king;
So filled with grief, the scorn upon him cast
Had lost its sting.

No pomp of words the lab'ring silence broke;
Mutely the eye besought, the lips implored;
Then, passionate, the heart leaped forth and spoke,
"Have mercy, Lord!"

And could no more; for then a storm arose,
Sweeping through all the chambers of the mind,
As when through northern forests shrieks and blows
The wintry wind.

* * * * * * * *

And He, the highest, sat in heaven and heard
The voice of both. For upward to his throne
There rise alike the ostentatious word
And under-tone

Spoken in murmurs. Whether vaunted loud,
Or held, like some shy secret in the mind,
He answers each—the contrite and the proud—
After their kind.

To some—like Caiaphas and Herod—naught;
To some, the smoke and whirlwind, as to Cain;
To some, the whisper, which, inbreathed to thought,
Can soothe its pain.

"Who ask not have not." Why should men repine
That He is jealous, and will reign alone?
Nor suffer us to rear an idol-shrine
Beside His own?

Who bows to self, of God hath small regard.
His pride he worships—let his pride befriend;
And "seen of men," of men he reaps reward
Until the end.

But when the sinners pour their anguished prayer,
All heaven is hushed while God himself imparts,
And "gathers up the fragments," to repair
Their broken hearts.

Trinity.

XII.

As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.—PSALM CXXV, 2.

ENCIRCLED as by angel bands,
What should the chosen people fear?
While ever "round about" them stands,
Through tempest shocks, in desert drear,
The Lord their God, with gracious hands
Uplift to bless and cheer.

The mountains round Jerusalem
Their ceaseless vigil ne'er forget;
Yonder the hills of Moab gem
The north with pink and violet;
Here, rich with many a stately stem,
The Olive-mount is set.

The city sleeps within the guard
Thrown o'er her, as a sevenfold shield;
And such the loving watch and ward
Which God hath on his children sealed;
An amulet—whose spell hath barred
All perils earth can yield.

Whether afar they wander wide,
Or nightly on his breast have leaned,
No distance from his love can hide
The souls that boundless love hath screened;
Safe, if they in his arms abide,
From traitor or from fiend.

Though we inconstant are, and frail,
Our weakness he doth not upbraid;
But through the midnight hears the wail
From frenzied hearts in anguish made;
And sendeth songs upon the gale
To warble through the glade.

For earth hath ne'er so lone a spot
But litanies can freight the air;
The bosky woodland's secret grot
Can charter an imploring prayer;
And e'en where trace of man is not,
God buildeth temples there.

Go where the arctic rigors freeze
The hardy life-blood in the veins;
Or tempt the ire of treach'rous seas;
Or cross sirocco-haunted plains;
In heat, or frost, or storm, or breeze,
The Lord our God remains.

O, can he murmur who can pray,
And with a present God commune?
Who carols, on his guarded way,
The cadence of some heavenly tune?
And knows that into fadeless day
He will be lifted soon?

Those eyes on which no slumbers steal
Their tenderness of watching bring;
And we the brilliant shadows feel,
The shadows of his shelt'ring wing;
While angels hover round, to seal
The children of the King.

"Henceforth for ever?" O to lie,
Like the beloved, on Jesus' breast!
See in the storm the Lord pass by,
And meet him on the billow's crest!
Then cheerful 'neath the purple sky
Depart, with him to rest.

Trinity.

XIII.

They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest.—Isaiah ix, 3.

HAT time, in twilight hour, the wains,
Rich with their freight of golden gains,
Move homeward through the fragrant lanes,

Beneath the crisp autumnal skies,
The harvest-carols love to rise;
While day in gorgeous sunsets dies.

Then industry and homely pride
Sit on the hearth-stone, satisfied,
In the calm thought of need supplied

Then olden hopes enkindled long,
To make men e'en through winter strong,
Die in delight, as swans in song.

Then, not doled out for niggard need,
The riches all the toils exceed,
The yield is wealthier than the seed.

Then burns a pure, unselfish joy;
Pure as the faith of gen'rous boy,
Which the false years will soon destroy;

A joy without or stint or guile,
As the glad sun's impartial smile
Which lights dark vault and minster aisle.

Every one's joy—a holy thing,
Which touches all—the sceptered king
And peasant—lord of crust and spring.

And thus—the prophet's lips reveal—
With no distempered pulses, feel
Who at Christ's altar rev'rent kneel.

They throb with joy of need supplied;
The rock in which they haste t' abide,
Doth still the healing fountain hide.

E'en at the glimpse of Saviour's form
Their fears are fled—though wont to swarm
Like omens of a constant storm.

The angel-hands are bid prepare
Bread for the hungry, "and to spare;"
The richest robe, the daintiest fare.

No selfish murmurs spoil the feast.
Love reigns. He who hath loved the least,
Dry as ungen'rous sands of east,

Whose lip in cold disdain had curled,
Whose heart by greed and self was churled,
Would fain arise and feed the world.

They joy "before Thee." If thy light
Beam not upon the wand'ring sight
The rapture is not perfect quite.

The aimless glances rove and stray
As some fair child's, whose frolic play
Is spoiled if father is away.

'Tis Thine to tune each loving chord,
Thou giv'st "the joy of harvest"—Lord!
Father! at once beloved, adored!

Fulfill the longing thou hast given.
Darkly from former Edens driven,
Give us thyself—that gift is heaven.

Trinity.

XIV.

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.—Ephesians iii, 10.

THE eldest-born of God rejoiced
When light from cleaving darkness sprang,
And choirs of angels, myriad-voiced,
Exulting woke, and sang.

Endowed with subtler sense than we,
They saw the glory of the Lord
Flash from fair earth and silver sea;
And, seeing, each adored.

Like minstrels whom their theme absorbs,
Till reckless who may bend to hear;
So, filled with song, those stately orbs
Asked for no heark'ning ear.

In fullness of the later time,
On favored Bethlehem's pastured plain,
The wakeful shepherds caught the chime
Of heavenly hosts again.

Drawn from their thrones by high desire
The love of God in Christ to scan,
Compassion swept each seraph-lyre
To breathe "good-will to man."

And list'ning worlds, from angel lips,
Heard strains of "rapturous amaze,"
And felt each new apocalypse
More prodigal of praise.

But now, just as a noble boy
Beneath some spell of language thrown,
Is wild to reproduce the joy
Of each remembered tone,

The Church below, in that strange lore
Which contrite hearts are apt to learn,
Provokes the angels to adore,
As she responds in turn.

Earth sings to heaven. Ye radiant powers
Who track the "wisdom" of the King!
Exalt your highest praise by ours,
Who quiver while we sing!

Where battling tempests shake the skies,
They melt to depths of softest blue.
From crushed herbs sweetest odors rise
Kissed by the pitying dew.

O how could angels e'er express
The harp-song of one human breast?
They never felt our weariness;
They cannot sing our rest.

Hence silent are the heavenly choir,
While men shout, "Greater to redeem;"
One wail from rebel heart is higher
Than chant of cherubim.

They sing—all-holy in their ranks—
Of perfect work in perfect strain;
We, wealthier, stammer forth our thanks
For canceled curse and pain.

Twice, downward, from the loving sky,
Their joyous bursts of praise are known;
Twice, upward, our poor minstrelsy
Swells to the sapphire throne.

In *theirs* we join. *Our* hymn of grace
Baffles each angel skill to reach;
The loftiest pæan of the place
Is woven from human speech.

Trinity.

XV.

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.—MATTHEW vi, 28.
I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lilly.
—HOSEA xiv, 5.

CLOSE sheltered in some fragrant nook
Beside the wanton river,
Or bending o'er the caroling brook
Whose love-song ceaseth never,
The trembling lily seeks to hide
Her first faint blush of maiden pride.

She wraps herself in emerald dress,
From each rude gazer's viewing,
Nor dreams her bashful loveliness
Inflames the zephyr's wooing;
Till, each fair coronal impearled,
She bares her beauty to the world.

Not in the bold and gay parterre,
'Mid queenlier flowers flaunting;
She loves to smile in silence, where
Such smiles are sorely wanting,
To reign in some far woodland court,
Where bird and brook hold summer sport;

FELTER &c

Not thankless for the sun and shower,
  Her saintly life she liveth;
The pure heart of her stainless flower
  In gratitude she giveth:
Heedful of heaven, but loving, too,
The dear moss-bank on which she grew.

'Tis thus they live! these emblems sweet
  Of hearts God's love hath sainted,
Which, sheltered in their blest retreat,
  Keep Eden's bloom untainted;
For "as the lily" they shall grow
By the still waters' ordered flow.

At Jesus' feet unseen, unheard,
  Each lowly one down lieth,
And feeds on that ambrosial Word
  Which every need supplieth;
Till, ripe for the awaiting hour,
They stand—God's priests of love and power.

Making life gay with happy psalms,
  They work amid their praying,
On darkened homes, in angel alms,
  Fresh light from heaven outraying;
Till eyes grow bright, and prayer ascends
For blessings on the lost one's friends.

Thus, while alike to heaven and earth
They willing service render,
Each hour some fairer charm hath birth;
Till, as in sunset splendor,
In all their pearl-white beauty stored,
They grace the garden of the Lord.

Trinity.

XVI.

He came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. —LUKE vii, 14, 15.

FORTH through the solemn street
The sad procession swept,
Pacing its mournful way with measured feet;
While inly wept

One mourner, in a grief
Stern as the silent years,
Which seemed to mock the common, weak relief
Of outward tears.

Keen was her sense of loss,
An agony untold;
For Death had seized, amid a world of dross,
Her piece of gold.

They bore her only son;
Star of her evening, fled;
Whose lesser light recalled that vanished one
Now long since dead.

For her best loved had died;
And, stunned from former bruise,
The widow's joyous oil of life had dried
Within her cruse.

Desert her heart, and bare;
Like lone house on a wild;
No voice to make blithe music on the stair,
No laughing child.

No solace from the past,
No hope in days to come,
She cowered as if sorrow's second blast
Had struck her dumb.

But, near the city's verge,
A sudden silence came;
The hired mourners swift forbore their dirge,
As if in shame

To mourn a lifeless clod
With such despairing cry,
While the Redeemer—"the strong Son of God"—
Was passing by.

"He came and touched the bier."
They wait, in curious pause:
Has He the power and will to interfere
With Nature's laws?

He walked upon the waves!
His word the thousands fed!
Is he imperial in the place of graves
Over the dead?

Then spake the royal word;
And, quick with rushing throes,
The red life in the clay obedient heard;
The dead arose!

And spoke—just as before—
Unconscious of eclipse;
Like babe, who only knows that night is o'er
From mother's lips.

Or one who, free from harm,
From the perfidious sea
Comes home, and finds all in his father's farm
Which used to be.

No desert dream of tombs,
Naught but life's love and joy;
As Nature has no thought, 'mid summer blooms,
That storms destroy.

The same through endless time,
Thus Jesus healeth now:
With "many crowns," for victories sublime,
Upon his brow.

Conq'ror in each stern fight
O'er mortal sin and dread;
And mighty, from corruption's foulest night,
To raise the dead.

Trinity.

XVII.

This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.—PHILIPPIANS iii, 13.

SHAKE from the soul its sloth!
These are not times Christ's service to refuse.
Heir of two worlds! for both
Thy spirit's manhood nobly brace and use;
Till glisten, on earth's clouds, thy bright life's covenant-hues.

Oft memory has embalmed
The recollections of what used to be;
Until, like ships becalmed,
We slumber on the dead past's waveless sea;
Nor from that sluggish dream e'er struggle to be free.

O for the constant mind
All meaner things to use and to control!
Till, like some faithful hind,
Who serves his lord for love, and not for dole!
Earth is but vassal to the heaven-aspiring soul.

This only thing to do,
Nor waste our spendthrift power on many plans.
A steadfast heart and true
Inheriteth all favor,—God's and man's;—
Weds earth to heaven; and angels smile upon the bans.

As, when the storm hath blown,
What time for rain the sultry woodlands parched,
Bends lovingly the zone
Of many colors in one rainbow arched;
So to one goal we bend each footstep of our march.

Or, as the wild bees roam
Through the rose-gardens and the woodbine bowers,
Bringing *one* essence home
From their sweet rifling of a thousand flowers;
So may we hoard for heaven our heritage of hours.

Why should we linger o'er
Each ancient pleasure, each familiar bond?
Or all the golden store
Of childhood's witching spells, or raptures fond?
They cling to these who have no better home beyond.

We are not children now.
Past is that season, credulously gay;
And manhood's sterner vow
Impels us to the field of mortal fray,
And woe to those who blench, or coward turn away!

We may but pass the night
On the gained summit, 'mid the shelt'ring snow;
Forth starting with the light,
Still upward to the higher crest to go;
Yearning, in present good, the glorious *best* to know.

We may not stay to quaff
The cups of welcome where the loved ones greet,
But grasp the palmer-staff,
And strap the sandals on the hurrying feet,
Lest, in the amber morn we fail our Lord to meet.

"Forgetting all behind."
O to press forward where the glories wait!
Nor e'er our loins unbind
Till we are safe within the lifted gate,
Amid the crowned, and in their kindred joy elate!

Trinity.

XVIII.

Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.—MATTHEW ix, 2.

WHO will doubt that wishful mother
Loves beyond all bribe or hire,
Though she gives some answer other
Than her fretful child's desire?
Strongest love is farthest sighted,
Sees the sun beyond the cloud,
By a richer radiance lighted,
With a subtler sense endowed.

More than all our poor petitions
Oft our Saviour loves to grant,
But on heavenlier conditions
Than our earth-bound longings want.
We lament o'er strange denials;
Idle words of fruitless prayer;
Beaded in the golden vials,
Christ has made them fragrant there.

We in present sorrow languish,
Gaze on heaven with eyelids dim,
Ask relief from mortal anguish,
Paining nerves or palsied limb;

But the Christ-eyes smile benignly,
Seeing deeper needs within,
And the Christ-lips speak divinely,
Whisp'ring of forgiven sin.

Healing this the deadlier cancer,
Speaking all the spirit pure;
Were not here a nobler answer
Than the shriveled flesh to cure?
All our litanies comprising,
By new insight understood,
'Neath a seeming frown disguising,
Brightest smile and chiefest good.

Lord! with humblest joy receiving
All thy cleansing word can do;
Haply, while we lie, believing
Thou wilt heal the palsy too;
Make the great salvation double,
Pour on soul and flesh the balm,
Loose the wailing heart from trouble,
Fit it for the victor's palm.

Teach our wayward souls reliance
That thy will is always best,
Though by stern and strange appliance
Thou dost shape us for our rest.
By thy grace we all inherit
Power to bear the cross and shame;
Firm endurance; martyr-spirit;
Singing saintly 'mid the flame.

When amid life's broken sleeping
Troubled visions o'er us roll,
And there break out floods of weeping
From the "great deep" of the soul;
Let our faith, in thee confiding,
Trust that thou wilt heal and save;
Till, contented in thy guiding,
We shall pass the conquered grave.

Trinity.

XIX.

Why stand ye here all the day idle?—MATTHEW xx, 6.

WO fields for toil—the outer and the inner,
Both overgrown with weeds;
Who to the labor hastes, to be the winner
Of all the laborer's meeds?

To bathe in radiant mornings, daily spreading
Over the heavens anew;
To sit 'neath trees of life, forever shedding
Their bounteous honey-dew.

To rouse a spirit, formed for God, from slumber,
And robe it for the light;
The heirs of heaven from clay to disencumber,
Which clogs their upward flight.

To lift a world, 'neath sin and sorrow lying,
And "pour in oil and wine;"
To warble, in the dulled ears of the dying,
Refrains of hymns divine.

Work for a lifetime, in each path up-springing,
In low or lofty spheres!
Hark to the Master's summons, always ringing
In quick and heedless ears!

Cool brain, strong sinew, heart with love o'erflowing,
Shall all in sloth escape?
Like vine, which, fruitless through its wanton growing,
Ne'er purples into grape!

The daylight wanes and dies—"Why stand ye idle?"
Life hasteth to its bourne!
The bridegroom tarries—will ye greet the bridal,
Or in the darkness mourn?

Lo! in the fields the yellow harvest drooping,
As lilies in the rain;
Where are the reapers, that they come not, trooping,
To gather in the grain?

Some, in the festive hall disporting gaily;
On slothful pillow, some;
Some, in delays most blameful, and yet daily
Exclaiming, "Lo, I come."

And some, infatuate, 'mid the alien's scoffing,
Quarrel about their toil;
As wreckers, when ships founder in the offing,
Grow murderous over spoil.

Meanwhile the harvest waiteth for the reaping,
God's patience hath not tired.
Ye cannot say—extenuate of your sleeping—
"We wait, for none hath hired."

Through the hushed noon-tide hour the Master calleth;
Ye cannot choose but hear;
Still sounding when the length'ning shadow falleth,
"Why stand ye idle here?"

Up! for a while the pitying glory lingers!
Work while it yet is day!
Then rest the Sabbath rest—where angel-singers
Make melody for aye.

Trinity.

XX.

Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.—John xi, 32.

"HE cometh not, although we sent him tidings
Soon as around our hearts the darkness grew,
He, whom till now, not love, though prone to chidings,
Could deem untrue.

"Ah me; our eyes were weary with their straining,
To see him traversing the olived slope;
Died, one by one, out of hearts bruised and paining,
Hope after hope.

"And through the leaden hours we watched him fading,
With whom the sun and stars went from the day;
Till, spite of tears, and tenderest upbraiding,
He slept away.

"Now this poor swept home does but mock the other,
Where the kind lightnings played from side to side;
'Ah, Lord; if thou hadst but been here, our brother
Would not have died!'"

But soon, as shoots a star to sight, a rumor
Strikes on the ear and heart that Jesus nears;
How at the sound each wild resentful humor
Dissolves in tears!

He comes too late! the loved one hath departed;
The covetous grave hath opened for its own;
Loud is the wailing of the broken-hearted
Above the stone.

"Take ye away the stone." It will encumber
The living in his passage from the dead.
The sleeper rose, cast off his desert slumber,
And left his bed.

Vain is the tomb's embrace, the spoiler's malice,
To him who drank himself the bitter cup;
He speaks—the life-wine mantleth in the chalice,
And brimmeth up.

"Not unto death, but for the Father's glory."
Through the hushed world the purpose is complete,
For they who mourned, and we who read the story,
Bow at his feet.

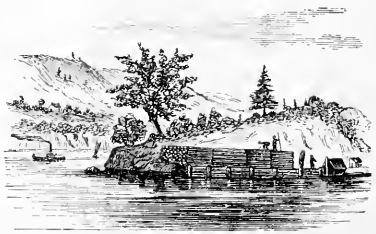
Dear human Friend, who wept before his praying,
Such tears as fall from our own weary eyes!
But through those tears there shone the Godhead, saying,
"Lazarus, arise!"

Restored again to the deep joy of being,
How the fond heart with love is ne'er sufficed!
"The eye is" never "satisfied with seeing"
The face of Christ.

And all the soul bends forth, entranced, to listen
While grace and truth come sparkling in each word;
As on the spray the morning dewdrops glisten
For bee or bird.

What wonder Love's sweet incense shed around him
Her wealth of spikenard—in libation poured!
What wonder Faith, with loyal reverence, crowned him
Her God and Lord!

He loves the human yet, with love undying,
And stills heaven's music while he leaves his throne,
From every charnel where *our* love is lying
To roll the stone.



Trinity.

XXI.

Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?—MATTHEW xviii, 21.

ITH large, round wonder in their eyes,
As children guess their onward way,
Awaking to some new surprise
Of thought and being, day by day,

So the meek souls at Jesus' feet
Left all their narrow spheres behind;
And sat, and learned, in converse sweet,
Which charmed, the while it cleared, the mind.

Already many a film has gone
Which vailed the Heavenly from their view;
And, as the healing power works on,
The *man* looms broader than the Jew.

"How often, Lord, dost thou require
Forgiveness to transgressors shown?
Till seven times shall the coals of fire
Upon the thankless heart be thrown?"

Strong was the soul, and firm the hand,
Which grasped a virtue great as this,
In those stern times, when no command
Had taught that love was strength and bliss.

But as the pilgrim, wild'ring, dwells
And lingers o'er some purpled scene,
Where sunlight streams through bosky dells,
On ivied cliffs, in deep ravine;

Yet feels the thoughts enkindled are,
Like wordless music, sweet but dim,—
So sweet, they bear his soul afar,
So vague, he cannot catch the hymn;—

Thus fear and joy, when Jesus saith,
"Not for the seventh, but endless time,"
Blend in the prayer, "Increase our faith
To scope and stature so sublime."

O for the heaven-imparted might
The true God-likeness to express!
The man, when smitten, turns to smite;
The God, offended, bends to bless.

The sun shines, though is rendered back
No gratitude of flowers and balms;
The rain, e'en on the simoon-track,
Can find some lovely isle of palms.

"Seventy times seven"—wider flow
The ripples of the Gospel-wave,
Till it embrace thy friend, thy foe,
The worst thou hast this side the grave.

Though he be thankless, cruel, cold;
By long pain hardened not to feel;
In crime all prematurely old;
A viper, stinging mercy's heel;

Though fortune's gifts and manhood's crowns
Into the dust his rage hath hurled;
Though charity hath naught but frowns
To give this orphan of a world;

Yet if he contrite weep, and burn
With long desire to be forgiven,
Thine enemy thou shalt not spurn,
Thou, for whom Christ hath purchased heaven.

For from the cross, and from the throne,
Where once He died, where now he lives,
The Saviour whispers to his own,
"Who much is pardoned, much forgives."

Trinity.

XXII.

Ye are come unto Mount Zion . . . and to the spirits of just men made perfect.—Hebrews xii, 22, 23.

THERE are times of saddest shrift
For these poor hearts of ours!
When weeping for some vanished gift,
Whose loss seemed from our earth to lift
The sunshine and the flowers;

When rustle round the heart dead leaves
From olden autumn strown;
And pensive memory sits and weaves
Crowns out of faded flowers, and grieves
Those dear ones—yonder flown.

Who says that death can conquer love?
Thoughts of the treasured past
Come dark'ning all the years above;
As, with the olive leaf, the dove
Sped homeward through the blast.

Each fond remembrance, ling'ring stays,
Green as the grass on graves;
The ancient looks, the winsome ways,
The wealth of love more sweet than praise;
These memory hides and saves.

Their steps are on the household stair;
We are not all bereft.
They sit in the familiar chair;
Echo the laugh, and swell the prayer,
As if they ne'er had left.

Thus fancy tricks the grosser sense,
Not loth to be deceived:
Thus clings the love, in poor pretense
It cannot bid the vision hence,
Half dreaded, half believed.

But *they* are not beneath the sod
Imprisoned, hopeless, dumb;
Awaking to the smile of God,
They follow where the Saviour trod,
And have "to Zion" come.

With all the choicest company
They, our beloved, abide;
Church of the first-born—seraphs high,
Down-darting from the upper sky:
Gathered to greet the Bride.

There we may join and love them still,
And list their wondrous tale,
And ramble round the peopled hill,
And with twin rapture gaze and thrill;
For O! how thin the vail!

Talk not of death! in covenant one
  Still heart responds to heart;
And though for them the strife is done,
The palm is waved, the battle won,
  We will not—cannot—part.

And we—the while we strive and pray
  'Gainst mysteries of sin,
And don Christ's armor as we may,
And, manful, cleave our hindered way
  Where they have entered in,

Feel each loved presence by our side
  Our strife to nerve and cheer;
While, in the fiercest fight descried,
He speaks—the Lord, who loved and died,
  They—*I*—await you here.

Trinity.

XXIII.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.—COLOSSIANS i, 12.

UNCONSCIOUS sowers, scattering seed,
We sow for harvests of a future reaping.
O, solemn life! in every deed
Yielding some secrets for the Judge's keeping,
Which years will reproduce
For sorrow or for use.

Close are the subtle links which bind
This life to that to which its fleeting hasteth;
Our nature is for *both* designed,
And each fair joy th' exulting spirit tasteth
Is from that God who fills
The rock's wild heart with rills.

And this poor world is full of joys
When light immortal rests on it benignly,
And the man's heart within the boy's
Longs for those glorious morns, which break divinely,
And turns to eastern skies
With bliss of upward eyes.

But who shall make our nature meet
For such great heirship?—ours—who hoard the treasure
The vain world flingeth at our feet,
Or woo, 'neath gay festoons, some fickle pleasure,
Or, with obsequious plumes
Cover the prophets' tombs?

'Tis he, the Father, whose rich love
Hath changed the heart, to new desires awaking,
And shaped it for its home above;
The vagrant dream into the heavenly breaking;
Till all the sloth and sin
Yield to his discipline.

The Father doth not trust his own—
So loved, so yearned for—to the careless stranger;
Nor may kind angel leave his throne,
Who feels the bliss, but has not felt the danger.
The Father's chastening mild
Alone can win the child.

It may be that the strength was shorn,
The pride of manhood humbled prematurely;
But from the feebleness was born
The true God-likeness in the spirit surely.
Then be the loud heart mute!
Autumn hath richest fruit.

Haply, the timid spirit leant
On others, as a staff,—those wise and kind ones,
To whom, of right, the rev'rence went;
As though, so led, the steps could ne'er be blind ones.
The staff broke; and, o'erthrown,
We rose, and walked alone.

Our heart, like summer-tendril, clings
To earth, replete with sacramental graces;
Death breathes upon our lovely things;
The friend, the child, look down with angel-faces;
Then we uplift the cry,
"Give peace, and let us die."

Thou knowest always what is best.
Our souls, down-lying on loved earth, to gather;
Perfect this meetness in our breast;
We will lie still, and give thee thanks, O Father!
Till, with the ransomed throng,
Life flowers into song.

Trinity.

XXIV.

Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.—John vi, 67, 68.

SOME faithless hearts have fled:
They could not bear the pureness, or the scorning,
And went away, as from among the dead
Foul things of darkness go when breaketh morning.

"And will ye leave me too?
On whom my love hath lighted, with long yearning
Of tenderest grace and truth, such as the dew
Hath for the flowers it cools 'mid tropic burning?

"Ye, whom I loved to teach,
Familiar things for heavenly symbols taking,
Clothing all nature with diviner speech;
Will *ye* go, like the world, your Lord forsaking?"

We bow 'neath Thy rebuke,
As children, grieved at some kind mother's chiding,
Who see her love come flashing through her look,
As suns through mist—more welcome for the hiding.

Ah! whither *can* we go?
(Dismayed and startled, as by sudden thunder;)
Who but thyself can "life eternal" show?
We ask, bewildered in our grief and wonder.

We must *some* refuge find:
The human cannot waste its life in sighing,
Nor gaze upon the sun till smitten blind,
Nor ever ask, where all forbears replying.

Great nature hath no balms;
O'erarching skies sound forth no glad evangel;
And misereres mingle with the psalms
The tired earth singeth to her pitying angel.

Denials cannot change
That dread unknown which lies beyond our seeing?
God hath united; we may not estrange
This dying life and that eternal being.

Death comes—but what beyond?
Some Stygian shore? some weird-like rest or roaming?
Or is it *home*, where welcomes warm and fond
Glance through the lattice, and light up the gloaming?

O life! eternal life!
Prize of the bounding spirit's vast ambition;
Hail to the warrior's doom or martyr's strife,
If we may hope for this enrapturing vision!

To whom shall we repair?
Mute are the oracles—the olden sages
Mock with their dumb lips our imploring prayer,
Which, answerless, moans downward through the ages.

No light! no rest below!
Our hearts are weary, and our voices falter;
Ah whither shall our anguished spirits go?
Lord! be thy love our plea—thy cross our altar!

All, all we want are thine!
Greek beauty, Roman rev'rence, in thee blended,
And nature glows into a holy shrine;
And form is spirit's robe—and doubt is ended.

We seek no other rest;
But as the swan smoothes down her ruffled pinion
In the wave-mirror of the lakelet's breast,
We, blest and calm, repose in thy dominion.

The truth of all we see
Speaks from thy lips—all discords reconciling;
Jesus, our Lord! we pray, we cling to thee,
Stoop from thy throne, and bless us with thy smiling.

That smile were present heaven
Let down upon the soul, no longer lonely,
All darkness banished if thyself be given;
We see, need, long for naught—save "Jesus only."

Trinity.

XXV.

It shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.—ISAIAH iv, 3, 4.

WHILE fast the darkling year decays,
And speed our hurrying moments on,
Shall not the ancient symbols blaze,
In blessing, on our guarded ways,
Till from the desert gone?

Or must we rise to holy deed,
Ere in our van the cloud will go
Through each wild waste our steps to lead?
Or ere shall shine, for nightly need,
The mystic pillar's glow?

Then, Lord, each wishful heart prepare
Thy promised presence soon to win;
Nor e'en thy sharper trials spare:
We will or sword or burning bear,
So we be purged of sin.

'Twere easy, 'mid the battle's blast,
To front the foe without dismay,
When music plays, and friends stand fast;—
But, when on lonelier warfare cast,
'Tis harder to obey.

To pine aloof, 'mid victories won—
To lose the guerdon, dearly prized—
The work, we longed to compass, done,
Accomplished by some meaner one
Whose aid our strength despised—

To be content in hermit cells,
Nor murmur in our helpless thrall,
While from the warrior bosom swells
The pride in which all valor dwells,
And sounds the bugle-call—

To work, like lightnings on the dark,
And leave no trace, nor memory long,
No friend to bid the world to hark
Its newest teacher; none to mark,
Or set our names in song—

To sit while stealthy slander tears,
As children rags, our good repute,
Until we breathe in poisoned airs,
And know no healing, save in prayers,
Yet be sublimely mute—

To feel that all our cherished joys,
And luxuries of happy tears,
Are gone, like a forgotten voice,
Or like an infant's broken toys,
Wrecks of the golden years—

Ay, these are heights of faith and hope
To which but few have strength to climb;
And those who earthward delve and grope
Are faint of heart and limb to cope
With such a toil sublime.

O for the power these heights to scale,
These Nebos of the prophet's fate,
Where airs from heaven are on the gale,
And from the crest, without a vail,
We see the jasper gate!

For this, until the haggard morn,
We wrestle in unequal strife;
And when with our long labor worn,
In Peniel-strength we "lift the horn,"
Like athletes, crowned for life—

For this—all welcome pain and loss,
If through their pangs Thy presence came!
Be ours the baptism of the cross!
If else we may not lose the dross,
Enkindle Thou the flame!

But that the fire may surely burn
All sordid, sensual thought away,
Lord! by the furnace watch, and yearn,
Till from the silver's heart return
Thine image, bright as day.

O teach us lowly to remain,
Without one murmur at thy feet;
Nor of the heaviest cross complain,
Till thou each docile spirit train
Into thy will complete!

Trinity.

XXVI.

And he brought him to Jesus.—John i, 42.

THERE is a love defies the years
To loose its clasp, or quench its fire;
A love which peril more endears,
Like flames which blaze in tempests higher.

A love which bears its steadfast part
The readiest when 'tis needed most,
And shows alike its brother-heart
'Mid sneers of blame and smiles of boast.

And when one soul, of truth in quest,
Some glorious Alpine reach hath won,
And knows the other, yet unblest,
Toils through the dark to greet the sun,—

His brother first he hastes t' invite,
To join him on the sunny slope,
Whence burst upon the wond'ring sight
Majestic views of faith and hope.

The links that bound the generous boys,
Who leaped the brook, or roamed the field,
Are welded by the manlier joys
Of doubt dispersed, and truth revealed.

'Tis ever thus. Who Jesus finds
Must all abroad the tidings speak.
Not for the hoard of miser minds
The heaven-light spreads from peak to peak.

The power which strikes from charger's hoof;
The might of the resplendent main;
The regal thought which dwells aloof
In some imperial poet's brain;

The burnish of the argentine;
The scent which sleeps in folded lid;
Not for themselves their grand design:
Where power is lodged, there use is hid.

Each spendthrift moment swells th' amount
Of power abused or run to waste;
And each augments the vast account
To which the circling seasons haste.

O, wherefore in disdainful sloth
Fold we our arms, while at our door
He stands unknown to whom our troth
Of fealty and love we swore?

The breathless world awaits the sign;
Its heart is sick—it beats so strong;
Shall we, who know the Lord, combine
To cheat its hope—its pain prolong?

As well our trait'rous hands were lift,
Like Cain's, on murder's purpose bent.
To each—to all—we bear the gift:
Heirs of a better testament.

If, in some holiday of grace,
We went to this new Rabbi's home,
And found, within that lowly place,
A wisdom strange to loftier dome;

There yet is room. The heart of Christ
Will no poor heart of man contemn;
And He, who all *our* need sufficed,
Is all they need to comfort *them*.

Trinity.

XXVII.

Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee.—DEUTERONOMY viii, 2.

THE year has wrought its mystic rede,
Its hours have passed with fleetest speed,
Its thought hath ripened into deed.

Its marvel and its mystery o'er,
Its promise grand of gift or store
Flushes the fevered cheek no more.

It held along its restless course,
As o'er the plain some fiery horse,
Without repose, without remorse.

Reckless if weal or woe betide,
If ban or boon be scattered wide;
Though some have lived, and some have died.

Though some, beneath the pitying moon,
Have struggled, paled, and fallen soon;
Some blazed through twilight into noon.

And it has died at last; though mirth
Ushered it to the expecting earth,
And bells rang at its joyous birth.

On, swift and stern the purpose runs,
The year, with all its pomp of suns,
Is urned amid the olden ones.

But, ere its solemn funeral,
It let its mantle-memory fall,
In last bequeathment, on us all.

The memories of its various times
Dwell in the tranceful ear, like chimes,
Or music of some old-world rhymes.

These memories—distinct, deep-lined—
Light up each traveled path behind,
Like fitful fire-lights, to the mind.

To some they cling like curse of Cain,
Down pressing, on the burdened brain,
Some torturing thought of giant pain.

To others, like a falling star,
They bring glad tidings, rich and far,
From worlds where light and beauty are.

Mutely the thronging visions pass;
Old joys, old griefs, in mingling mass,
Vivid, minute, as in a glass.

Each peril, once so darkly feared,
Each omen, sinister and weird,
Each fonder home-thought, twice endeared.

No single feature softened down,
Each joy its smile has, and its crown,
Each grief its old orig'nal frown.

It cannot be that life shall end
In the dark grave o'er which we bend
When memory hath no death for friend.

And as we muse, the truths beneath
Flash forth as from an inner sheath;
The lessons which all years bequeath,

That, 'mid the tumult and unrest,
Thick mists upon the mountain's breast,
God's sun is glad upon the crest.

That wrong is but the slave of right,
And soon the day shall burst in sight,
And earth be steeped in heaven-light.

Sabbath Morning.

SWEET is the sunlight after rain,
And sweet the sleep which follows pain,
And sweetly steals the Sabbath rest
Upon the world's work-wearied breast.

Of heaven the sign—of earth the calm!
The poor man's birthright and his balm!
God's witness of celestial things!
A sun "with healing in its wings."

New rising in this Gospel time,
And in its sevenfold light sublime;
Blest day of God! we hail the dawn,
To gratitude and worship drawn.

Through the hot world, from week to week,
'Twere vain the soul's repose to seek;
But on the Sabbath's restful air
Is Nature's voiceless call to prayer.

O'er all the quiet landscape spreads
A hush, like that which evening sheds
When sounds are still, and flowers are furled,
And shadows wrap the slumb'ring world.

As birds which, scared by sound of wars,
Fly up to nest among the stars,
But come to their familiar tree
When earth to list their song is free;

So holy thoughts will flee the breast
By travail of the week oppressed,
But when the psalms of Sabbath rise
Will hasten downward from the skies.

But e'en the Sabbath charms to cheat,
Unless the answering soul is meet,
No rest the hallowed hours impart,
Save only to the hallowed heart.

Whether our faith in temples pleads,
Or love is bent on duteous deeds;
Or lingering sickness gasps and pines
For meekest trust in God's designs;

Or erring steps are kindly borne
From scenes of shame or seats of scorn;
Whene'er we come with covenant new,
O Saviour! teach us to be true.

O, naught of gloom and naught of pride
Should with the sacred hours abide;
At work for God—in loved employ
We lose the duty in the joy.

Breathe on us, Lord! our sins forgive,
And make us strong in faith to live;
Our utmost, sorest need supply,
And make us strong in faith to die.

Sabbath Evening.

NOTHER Sabbath sun is down,
Gray twilight creeps o'er thorp and town;
How much of sorrow, unconfessed,
Lies hidden in yon dark'ning West!

What burdens uncomplaining borne,
What masks o'er latent anguish worn,
What pangs of heart-break, plots of sin,
Have this night's shadows folded in!

We woke to-day with anthems sweet
To sing before the mercy-seat,
And ere the darkness round us fell
We bade the grateful vespers swell.

Whate'er has risen from heart sincere,
Each upward glance of filial fear,
Each litany devoutly prayed,
Each gift upon thine altar laid,

Each tear regretful of the past,
Each longing o'er the future cast,
Each brave resolve, each spoken vow,
Jesus, our Lord! accept them now.

Feller

Whate'er beneath thy searching eyes
Has wrought to spoil our sacrifice;
Aught of presumption, over bold,
The dross we vainly brought for gold;

If we have knelt at alien shrine,
Or insincerely bowed at thine,
Or basely offered "blind and lame,"
Or blushed beneath unholy shame;

Or—craven prophets—turned to flee
When duty bade us speak for thee;
'Mid this sweet stillness, while we bow,
Jesus, our Lord, forgive us now!

O let each following Sabbath yield
For our loved work an ampler field,
A sturdier hatred of the wrong,
A stronger purpose to grow strong:

And teach us erring souls to win,
And "hide" their "multitude of sin;"
To tread in Christ's long-suff'ring way,
And grow more like him day by day.

So as our Sabbaths hasten past,
And rounding years bring nigh the last;
When sinks the sun behind the hill,
When all the "weary wheels" stand still;

When by our bed the loved ones weep,
And death-dews o'er the forehead creep,
And vain is help or hope from men;
Jesus, our Lord, receive us then!

Christmas Day.

Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will toward men.—LUKE ii, 13, 14.

"SUDDEN," as if there could not be repressed
The hidden rapture of the heaven longer,
The song burst forth; like a soul-burden, stronger
By dint of constant hiding in the breast.

And as that revelry of praise increased,
And o'er the heedful, silent plain resounded;
O, how the rapt hearts of the watchers bounded,
Nor knew, entranced, when the loved music ceased!

Never before did heavenly minstrels note
Earth's answer with theirs blending, like a minor;
And still those strains, than all our strains diviner,
On through the world and down the ages float.

The charter of our freedom, ne'er reversed!
The glorious feast to which our God hath bidden!
The pledge and earnest of a goodlier Eden
Than ever Adam tilled, or Satan cursed!

Ears deaf to other anthems hark to this,
And long that each blest cadence ne'er may alter;
'Tis the bowed earth's involuntary psalter,
Her perfect utterance of perfect bliss.

"Glory to God!" for that sublime descent,
Which showed the greater Godhead in the stooping
Homeward to lead poor exiles, faintly drooping
In sad remorse and desert discontent!

"Glory to God!" 'mong angel thrones and ranks,
For the unutterable joy of raising
Sinners to seraphs, endless in their praising;
Stirred by the voiceless heart, whose throbs are thanks!

"And peace on earth!" The strain hath gentler airs,
Which strike upon each ruffled chord of feeling,
As sunlight on a saintly maiden, kneeling
With hushed face, by a sick bed, at her prayers.

"Peace on the earth!" We listen, and grow calm,
When doubt has darkened, or when pain convulses;
E'en the wild leaps of passion's fever-pulses
Are still as childhood's, 'neath the healing balm.

"Good-will to men"—if but their souls respond.
Men whose calm brows are ever lifted sunward,
Who are by heavenly voices guided onward
To where God lives, of homes and hearts the bond.

"Good-will to men," of every speech or clime.
The advent one—the kindness universal!
The world is summoned to the glad rehearsal!
Learner of harper's skill and minstrel's chime!

O, sorcery rare! oft have its 'trancing spells,
More potent when the storm-clouds gathered denser,
Breathed fragrance on the air—as in the censer
The "linkèd sweetness" of all flowers dwells.

Father in heaven! we bless thee for the song!
It melts into our hearts, and makes them warmer;
It stirs us to put on the warrior's armor,
And in thy name do battle with the wrong.

Father in heaven! we bless thee for the Child!
For in him thou hast blest with endless blessing;
No reach of good—no gift beyond our guessing,
Is lacking now, with Jesus reconciled.

And all the human joy these seasons know
Is but a solemn act of recognition—
A silent homage, paid to that blest vision,
Of Him;—the Lord in heaven—the Child below.

Good Friday.

When they were come to the place that is called Calvary, there they crucified him.—LUKE xxiii, 33.
Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer.—LUKE xxiv, 46.

CLOSE the book, and seal the seal,
And let the vail drop over all;
Would that oblivion could conceal
What memory shudders to recall!

'Twas here, on this accursèd hill,
"Without the gate," the deed was done,
Which made the vexed earth's heart to thrill,
And darkened th' indignant sun.

Here rose the taunts of cruel scorn,
Here hung the felons by His side;
Less vile than they who wove the thorn,
And reared the cross on which He died.

Well might the night o'erspread the day,
As darkness ruled e'er time began,
When He, whom heavenly hosts obey,
"Was made a curse" for sinful man.

"Was made a curse;" but never yet
Did curse such fruit of blessing bear;
For all our sin, and doom, and debt,
By costliest price were canceled there.

Hence, more than other, Calvary's slopes
Invite the pilgrim-feet to stray,
As some fair shrine, where buried hopes
Love has embalmed to cheat decay.

The full heart here, all shrines above,
Its wealthier adoration pours;
In sight of that all-suffering love,
The eyes may weep, the faith adores.

'Tis not the life, divinely pure,
And even more divinely kind:
'Tis not the power all ills to cure,
Nor flash earth's beauty on the blind:

'Tis not that loaves to banquets grew
Whene'er He willed the thousands fed:
Nor, at His word, that life anew
Quickened the swathed or buried dead:

'Tis not His teaching, though He spake
The wisest words to human thought;
Words, which the proud ones oft mistake,
But sweetly to the child-heart taught:

Life, healing, teaching! in all these
  Some purpose and some lesson lie;
But faith the deeper mystery sees,
  "That it behoved" the "Christ to die."

To die, not in oblation vain,
  The seal to all his words to give;
Not in the martyr's scorn of pain;
  To die that all the world might live!

O for the heart this truth to learn,
  Erewhile too darkly understood!
We for the living Saviour yearn;
  Our trust is in the sprinkled blood!

And while by faith we humbly cling
  To Christ the crucified alone,
Each to his cross our sins would bring,
  Eager to crucify our own.

Ascension Day.

And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.—LUKE xxiv, 50, 51.

"HE led them forth," as oft before,
Along the dear, familiar way;
But on that long-remembered day
The road seemed shorter than of yore.

Before the lightning leaps to kill
Dread hush comes o'er the swooning air;
And so, oppressed by nameless care,
Each felt as if his heart stood still,

Smitten with sense of fear or pain;
Yet all unconscious whence it sprang,
And mindful only of a pang
As if its fibers cleft in twain.

"He led them forth," and sweetly loth
To lose one human memory here,
His home of love, his haunt of fear,
The road to triumph neared them both.

"He led them forth," where many a shrine
Of tender truth their hearts had piled,
And many a mood and hour beguiled
With affluent talk on things divine.

And love had lingered there so long
That all around seemed charm and token;
So there its last word must be spoken,
Or it would grieve with sense of wrong.

And where but from the "house of woe"
Could loftiest songs of triumph rise?
Do not our own sad Bethanies
Distill the subtlest joys we know?

Unvail the heavenly worlds afar?
Till, purged and strong, the upward faith
Can hear what each crowned harper saith,
And worship where the angels are?

And now upon the mount He stands,
With heaven already on his brow;
Who dares to doubt his Godhead now?
And blesses them with lifted hands.

"He blessed them"—this the great design
For which incarnate God came down,
To weave, of mortal thorns, the crown;
To turn earth's water into wine.

His life was blessing. When He spoke
The tempest slept, the winds were balm,
Demoniacs hushed in kindest calm,
The iron bands in sunder broke,

The famine fled from hollow eyes,
The desert dreams of death were past,
The four days' dead, though charneled fast,
Awoke to life with sweet surprise.

And now, while the cloud-chariots wait,
And angel-guards to tend Him throng,
'Mid radiant host and seraph song,
He pauses, e'en at heaven's gate,

To shed his latest blessing round:
And while their swelling hearts yet leap
And quiver 'neath its music deep,
A rush of wings—and He is crowned!

Not flushed with conqueror's selfish pride,
But calm and kingly, He ascends;
His last thought here is for his friends,
His first in heaven, their fears to chide,

For as they awe-struck wait, and dumb,
The white-robed heralds whisper low,
"Why stand ye gazing upward so?
A second time your Lord shall come."

Beyond dark clouds and jasper walls
We, blinded, cannot see the track,
We may not wish the prophet back,
Nor gaze until his mantle falls.

We fain would with our Lord ascend;
But we are frail. O Saviour! keep,
And witness, ere we fall on sleep,
"Who loves us, loveth to the end."

Baptism.

BRING all your new-born joys,
The rapture which you almost fear to feel,
And in one cov'nant anthem give them voice,
The while you lowly kneel.

Pay unto Heaven your vows!
Come laden richlier than with turtle doves!
Offer your fairest—offer in God's house
The children of your loves!

Not passed through Moloch-fire;
Not as the sacrificial firstling, slain;
But rendered, as the music from the lyre,
For praise and not for bane.

With swell of inward song,
And the heart's wrestling litanies of prayer,
Give them to Him to whom yourselves belong;
Commit them to His care.

Bring them in robes of white—
Robes of the penitent—the dead—the blest;
The inner grace, which shineth through the rite,
Will dower them of the best.

Not, as by sorcerer's charm,
To rise renewed from the baptismal flood,
But given to Christ, to feel his circling arm
Enfoldeth every good.

'Twill not be all in vain.
If faith abideth by the sacred ark;
But on the child, e'en in the holy fane,
Will Jesus set his mark.

Seal of the cov'nant new,
While the bright chrism yet rests upon the face,
As on the flow'rets rest the morning dew—
Token of future grace.

Yes! bring the children soon!
Christ will not utter one reproachful word,
But "suffer them" that they may take the boon
By royal hands conferred.

An angel guard to fence
The young soul from its early perils round!
And waft the slumber from the droning sense
Upon enchanted ground.

Supply of daily strength
Awaiting use, amid earth's burd'ning cares;
Help springing out of trouble; and, at length,
Answers to vialed prayers.

Until all-dedicate,
Their willing souls from evil forces freed,
The blessing falleth on the heart and state,
And they are Christ's indeed!

Then ye who frankly give,
And they, the tender nurslings of your love,
Linked by one bond eternally, shall live
One family above.

The Lord's Supper.

This do in remembrance of Me.—Luke xxii, 19.
Ye do show the Lord's death till he come.—1 Corinthians xi, 26.

DEAR pledge of love divinely true,
The rainbow of the cov'nant new,
Symbol of peace, 'mid sacred strife,
Spanning the stormy heaven of life.

How the blest bond each spirit brings
From common cares to holy things;
And bids both hope and mem'ry wake
In loving watch, for Jesus' sake!

If nations, in their grateful praise,
Columns to wise or valiant raise;
If some tall mound, or guarded tree,
Hallow the shrines of liberty;

If relics of dear days gone by
Are hoarded from rude gazer's eye,
And cherished with extremest care,
And linked with life, and blessed by prayer;

Be this *our* sign! that Christ hath wrought
Triumph for us, transcending thought;
Be this *our* gauge! that Christ doth bear
Deep love for us, beyond compare.

Like those old songs we ne'er forget,
So rise and fall the accents yet,
"I go to leave you. Ye are mine.
Come, eat the bread, and drink the wine.

"Take at my hands this latest boon,
Ye will a tend'rer memory soon;
And when my face no more ye see
By this—my blood—remember me."

Sounds, 'plaining still that dear bequest,
Of Christian faith the badge and test;
Last message to the Church below,
"My death until my coming show."

Link—to assure our hearts—the twain,
Future of worship—past of pain,
Session of judgment—blast of scorn,
That, crown of glory—this, of thorn.

And as, sometimes, when words would fail,
The kindling eye takes up the tale,
And speaks in light, though not in sound,
Its prophecy to all around;

So let this living symbol teach
More eloquent than human speech,
The Saviour died. Our sins he bore.
The Saviour lives, "to die no more."

Here while we wait, in rev'rent fear,
Longing, yet trembling, to draw near,
Waiting for some celestial sign,
Some warrant from the lips Divine;

O breathe the life into the bread!
And let our hung'ring hearts be fed!
The power into the cup inspire,
To slake our soul-thirst of desire!

Let us the mount of vision scale,
And pierce the skies, and pass the vail,
And hear th' adoring harpers' tone,
And see "the rainbow round the throne."

Then turn from these blest sights away,
To work and win as conqu'rors may,
Thy braver witnesses to be,
Constraining men—and worthy Thee.

Matrimony.

AS voyagers on a lake,
Beyond some wooded knoll or headland glancing,
Through the wild shimmer of the sunlight dancing
O'er heathery hill and brake;

The while with joy they thrill,
Are longing to intensify the feeling,
And sure each glowing change, o'er landscape stealing,
Will show scenes lovelier still;

So, on life's changeful sea,
Now calm, now storm-swept, hearts which sail together,
Can find their bliss in clear or low'ring weather,
Yet long still more to see;

And join their vent'rous hands
Together the dark future to unravel;
Deeming the twain are stronger for the travel
Into mysterious lands.

O, sacred wedded love!
To-day come trooping friends with kindly token,
Breathing heart-blessings which lips leave unspoken,
But which are heard above.

Heaven wafts her gentlest airs.
New radiance lights all ordinary places,
And all the features of familiar faces
Grow bright—as if with prayers.

A blessing on the bond!
The sacred link of those already plighted,
Not for this wasting world alone united,
But for the vast beyond.

On this remembered morn,
When hope and memory, in a solemn meeting,
Give to each other holy tryst and greeting,
Be a blest future born!

While in th' mutual troth
Each guileless heart in surest trust reposes;
May faith entwine, of her fair heavenly roses,
Life-coronets for both.

The flowers along th' aisle
Be of life's path the ever-blooming symbol;
And the life-music—more than clang of cymbal—
Kind voice and sunny smile.

Rapture without regret!
A fire with love for its perennial fuel;
The chrysolite of life; a costly jewel
In a home-casket set.

A blessing on the twain
Made one to-day in new communion mystic!
May fragrant clouds, in baptism eucharistic,
Bless each with gracious rain!

And the kind sun for aye
Shine on the home, sweet light of Heaven providing,
The home where dwelleth Christ—therein abiding
As in each heart to-day!

Burial of the Dead.

PERCHANCE we watched around the bed
The fading of each nameless grace,
The life-light ebbing from the face,
Until the last slow wave had sped,
And left us gazing on the cold, unanswering dead.

The dead! what wonder in the word!
From thought and feeling strangely mute;
No music in the broken lute
To be by man or nature stirred;
Heedless of streamlet's voice, or lay of household bird.

The cypress is their only wreath;
And grief above them gasps and sobs;
You would not think what rebel throbs,—
As if a sword should chafe its sheath,—
Shook their wild hearts a week since. Now they sleep beneath.

We pass below the somber yews,
Which all the greening barrows guard;
And tread the still and rank church-yard,—
That lone, stern path which none refuse;
While all the world seems draped in solemn funeral hues.

They rest;—but we, the living, pour
Our soul-rain on their opened graves;
Such small relief our nature craves.
They knew our heart's true love before;
Haply—not all unconscious—now they know it more.

And we to them give juster praise:
As those who, upward, from a mine,
See through the fainter daylight shine
Some steadfast star's unquenching blaze,
We see, through the dark tomb, their white and
blameless rays.

"Ashes to ashes. Dust to dust."
Of all our love, is this the end?
Is nothing left us of our friend
But treasured page, or marble bust,
And leal life-memories of inviolate truth and trust?

To sense no more. But faith can bid
The shadows from the soul uplift,
And own again the vanished gift,
Spite of the lying coffin-lid.
Only in trance of pause, our loved are from us hid.

Cast on the waveless lake your eye,
And in the mirror of its breast,
The cots—the pines—the snowy crest—
All in the depths reflected lie;
And, stretched in azure arch, serene and broad the sky:

So Faith, when weeping over tombs,
Sees Easter-symbols in the clod,
Hills which go climbing up to God,
A fragrant wealth of heavenly blooms,
And far beyond, the glory of the golden domes.

Sorrow may not become despair;
For Christ hath in the charnel lain
To turn its sore disgrace to gain.
He will both grave and crown prepare;
Who shed a Saviour's blood, will show a Saviour's care.

INDEX OF FIRST LINES.

	Page
Another Sabbath sun is down	192
As on some queenly forehead shines a rare and costly gem	37
As swiftly flies the startled dove	76
As travelers o'er some darksome waste	82
As voyagers on a lake	215
Bring all your new-born joys	207
By trifles, in our common ways	15
Closer to Christ the loved ones grew	88
Close sheltered in some fragrant nook	146
Down the dark vale of time full many a glance	18
Dear pledge of love divinely true	210
Encircled as by angel bands	137
Faith speaks, while sense is dumb and sad	115
Father! from all things marred and base	94
Fiercely on Salem's towers and hills	56
Fierce through the land the invader sweeps	60
Forth through the solemn street	151
Glad welcomes float around	130
Great are thy works, O God! and sought	63

	Page
Hand in hand through all our ways	118
He cometh not, although we sent him tidings	164
"He led them forth," as oft before	203
Lord, wilt thou now the throne restore?	85
O'er Gennesaret, mountain-bordered	40
O close the book, and seal the seal	200
O there are times of saddest shrift	170
O speak not thus to hearts all palpitating	22
O wherefore should those hands of love	73
O who can tell of the sower's cares	46
Perchance we watched around the bed	218
Room for the last and largest grace	49
Shake from the soul its sloth!	155
Some faithless hearts have fled	176
Speak not of trifles light as air	28
Stately on Shinar's ancient plain	91
"Sudden," as if there could not be repressed	197
Sweet is the sunlight after rain	189
The furrows are straightly drawn	34
The hour is come! 'tis thus He wakes	66
The eldest-born of God rejoiced	143
The restful look which angels wear	43
The year has wrought its mystic rede	186
There are who say the world is drear	104
There are would earth and heaven divorce	109
There is a love defies the years	183
There's winter on the hills to-day	53
They cast him forth, fierce in their rage and hate	25
'Tis early morn, Come, cross the brook	70
Two fields for toil—the outer and the inner	161

PAGE
Unconscious sowers, scattering seed..... 173
Upon the temple's glittering floors..... 100

What is it that He saith?..... 79
What time, in twilight hour, the wains..... 140
When art has grasped some graceful dream..... 121
Where is the rest we long to gain?..... 30
While fast the darkling year decays..... 179
Who will doubt that wishful mother..... 158
Who would not learn a lore like this..... 112
With brow upraised, as one who sees his peers..... 133
With large round wonder in their eyes..... 167
With lightnings belted, cloud and tempests broke 11
With sightless eyes and silver hair..... 124

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 016 165 639 2